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ABSTRACT

Case studies were conducted in six school districts nationwide to examine teacher selection in terms of policy and organizational context, organizational characteristics, selection processes, and effects. Interviews were conducted in each district with directors of personnel, superintendents, staff involved in the selection process, directors of curriculum and instruction, directors of research, and local teachers' organization officials. At representative schools, principals, recently hired teachers, and more senior teachers were interviewed and other relevant data gathered. This report details the findings for each of the districts studied and assesses aspects of each school district's procedures. Conclusions and recommendations to improve teacher selection, recruitment, screening, hiring, placement, induction, and evaluation processes are presented. These involve the enhancement of the efficacy of state and local policies for recruitment efforts; tighter bonds between recruitment and hiring decisions; recognition and balancing of the varying operational definitions of a "good teacher"; recognition of the effects of the hiring process on teachers; need to place teachers carefully in the appropriate setting and school; need for comprehensive induction plans for new teachers; and development of a special evaluation program specifically for beginning teachers. (CB)

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Effective Teacher Selection

From Recruitment to Retention

Arthur E. Wise, Linda Darling-Hammond,
Barnett Berry
With David Berliner, Emil Haller,
Amy Praskac, Phillip Schlechty

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January 1987

Prepared for the
National Institute of Education

RAND

Center for the Study of
the Teaching Profession

PREFACE

This report is directed at two audiences. It should be of interest to school districts that will soon be seeking large numbers of new teachers. As a result, many school districts will want to improve their recruitment, screening, hiring, placement, induction, and evaluation procedures. It should also be of interest to those who wish to understand the effects of teacher selection practices. These practices, like most public policy practices, have both intended and unintended consequences. An effective teacher selection system is one that results in the hiring and retention of the kind of teacher the district values rather than the kind of teacher who merely happens by and stays.

The study described here was sponsored by the National Institute of Education (now the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education). The preparation of the report was supported by RAND's Center for the Study of the Teaching Profession, which in 1986 received grants from the James S. McDonnell Foundation, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, the Metropolitan Life Foundation, and the Aetna Life and Casualty Foundation, Inc.

This study is the product of the efforts of a team of researchers from The RAND Corporation and elsewhere. The case studies upon which the study rests were conducted by eight researchers. David C. Berliner studied the Mesa, Arizona, schools; Linda Darling-Hammond, Arthur E. Wise, Barnett Berry, and Amy Praskac, the Montgomery County, Maryland, schools; Arthur E. Wise, the East Williston, New York, schools; Arthur E. Wise, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Amy Praskac, the Hillsborough County schools; Emil G. Haller, the Rochester, New York, schools; and Phillip C. Schlechty and George W. Noblit, the Durham County schools. The work was enriched by the varied perspectives brought to each of the case studies.

The latter are summarized in Chap. II; the full case studies are available in a companion Note, *Effective Teacher Selection: From Recruitment to Retention—Case Studies*, N-2513-NIE/CSTP, January 1987. The task of synthesizing and analyzing them and developing conclusions and recommendations fell to Arthur E. Wise, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Barnett Berry.

The six districts studied were selected with the assistance of a panel representing most of the major education associations. The members (and their then current affiliations) were: Dr. Herman Behling, Maryland State Department of Education; Dr. Herman Goldberg, American

Association of School Administrators; Ms. Joanne Goldsmith, National Association of State Boards of Education; Dr. James Keefe, The National Association of Secondary School Principals; Dr. Willie J. Kimmons, University of the District of Columbia; Ms. Lucille Maurer, Delegate, State of Maryland; Dr. Bernard McKenna, National Education Association; Dr. James Mecklenburger, National School Boards Association; Ms. Margaret Montgomery, National Association of Elementary School Principals; Dr. William Pierce, Council of Chief State School Officers; and Ms. Marilyn Rauth, American Federation of Teachers. The districts chosen for case studies had highly developed selection practices or paid particular attention to their selection of teachers.

SUMMARY

Growing enrollments, pending retirements, and educational reform initiatives have given rise to an increasing demand for teachers in the nation's public schools. The supply of teachers, on the other hand, has been declining. It is anticipated that, in 1992, the supply of newly graduated teachers will fill only two-thirds of the positions available. Inner-city and rural school districts will probably be the hardest hit by the impending shortage, but all schools and districts will have to contend with the effects of growing competition for teachers. This study thoroughly examined teacher selection procedures in six school districts. As the result of this examination and a review of several streams of research, it suggests ways in which procedures might be improved to meet the hiring challenges of the next decade.

In getting new teachers into the classroom, school districts undertake a series of activities—recruiting qualified applicants, screening them according to evaluative criteria, hiring the most qualified, and placing them where their skills are most needed. Teacher selection does not end there, however. Districts also try to evaluate, strengthen, and keep their new hires during their first terms, when they are especially likely to leave.

The case studies revealed that, while many district selection procedures appear, on their face, to be similar, there are substantial differences in (1) the criteria embodied in selection tools used (interview guides, tests, certification standards, and evaluation of credentials); (2) the weights placed on different indicators of teaching ability; (3) the extent to which selection processes are centralized or decentralized; and (4) the manner in which candidates are treated, both before and after hiring. Consequently, districts—and schools within them—have different (and often internally competing) operational definitions of the "good teacher"; furthermore, their ability to secure the types of candidates they seek is very much influenced by the means by which they go about assessing candidates, collecting and distributing information to decisionmakers, and interacting with candidates.

Our case studies were conducted at a time when large supplies of teachers for relatively few vacancies were beginning to shift to shortages in some areas. Because most school districts were still using selection procedures designed to sort and screen out large numbers of candidates, some were experiencing difficulty in adapting their systems to changes in the teacher labor market. Among the problems that

emerged were local and state obstacles to more aggressive recruiting; loss of candidates because of cumbersome and lengthy screening processes; the timing of hiring and placement decisions; increased competition among schools for the "better" candidates; increasing tensions between the centralized and decentralized aspects of the selection process; and concerns about the induction, evaluation, and retention of larger numbers of beginning teachers.

We now take up our conclusions and recommendations regarding each of these teacher selection activities. We conclude with a note on the role of the induction school in the making of a teaching professional.

RECRUITMENT

In times of increased demand for teachers, many school districts seek to actively recruit teachers from outside their immediate vicinity. **Conclusion One:** *State and local policies can enhance or reduce the efficacy of wide-ranging recruitment efforts.* They can enhance them through favorable compensation and relocation incentives, but there seems to be a greater potential for selection policies to inhibit recruiting outside the locality or state. Most school districts require placing internal transfers before hiring new teachers. New hiring may thus be delayed until late summer, by which time the prospects, especially those some distance away, may have already gone elsewhere. Most districts impose a cap on the salaries they will offer experienced candidates; quite often highly educated and experienced teachers must take a cut in pay if they move to a new locality and want to continue to teach. Other obstacles to interstate mobility include varying requirements for state certification and policies disallowing the transfer of benefits and denying reimbursement for travel and moving.

Districts experiencing shortages of qualified applicants find that both the monetary rewards and working conditions they can offer candidates are major determinants of the success of their recruiting efforts. The status of public school teaching might be improved if the labor market for teachers were freer. If teachers could sell their services free of interdistrict and interstate obstacles, talented teachers might get more public recognition and be better rewarded, and school districts might be compelled to improve working conditions to compete for them.

> Recommendation 1A: *In the first instance, successful recruitment depends upon the attractiveness of teaching. Therefore, states and local districts should examine the salaries they offer*

teachers to see if they are competitive with those of other jurisdictions and occupations and should seek to improve the conditions of work which are important to teachers, such as the provision of adequate support to new teachers.

Recommendation 1B: *Certain state and local policies limit interstate mobility. Therefore, states which wish to recruit widely should reexamine certification, retirement, and other policies which prevent or discourage mobility. School districts should eliminate arbitrary limits on salary schedule placement and be prepared to provide travel and moving expenses.*

Conclusion Two: *Tight coupling between recruitment and hiring decisions promotes more effective teacher selection.* Information regarding vacancies is not always quickly and accurately transmitted from schools to district recruiting officials. Applicants may be discouraged if they have trouble securing information regarding their progress through the selection process.

Recommendation 2A: *Because school districts lose many candidates between recruitment and hiring, they should develop planning systems so that specific hiring needs can be more accurately anticipated and recruitment can be targeted.*

Recommendation 2B: *The recruitment, screening, hiring, and placement phases of the selection process must be coordinated so that bureaucratic processing, red tape, and lapses in time do not result in the loss of desirable candidates. This coordination is especially important as demand exceeds supply and screening processes become more elaborate.*

SCREENING

Conclusion Three: *Operational definitions of the "good teacher" vary across and within school districts.*

Recommendation 3A: *As states define standards for teaching (through new teacher education, certification, and tenure procedures) and as school districts define their own standards, they must recognize that there is no one best system of teaching and that teaching needs vary across and within school districts.*

Recommendation 3B: *As school districts adopt new selection instruments (tests, interview guides, etc.), they should ensure that the instruments and the weights given to their scores match the district's definition of good teaching.*

> Recommendation 3C: *Senior teachers as well as principals should be involved in the selection process. Their involvement enhances the validity of the process, by providing greater insight into candidates' subject matter competence and teaching philosophy, and conveys a view of teaching as a professional role.*

Conclusion Four: *In screening candidates, school districts inevitably balance high scores on objective measures of academic qualifications with assessments of other characteristics deemed important for teaching.* For example, some districts favor academic qualifications by weighting test scores more heavily in selecting teachers, whereas others favor interpersonal skills by placing more emphasis on interview scores. Furthermore, tests vary in the relevance of the knowledge they cover, and interviews vary in the degree to which they balance affective and cognitive orientations toward teaching.

Variations are not restricted to the district level. Different schools within a district may require teachers with different strengths. Some districts deemphasize centrally administered tests and interviews and allow their schools to screen candidates on the basis of less formal interviews or classroom observations.

> Recommendation 4A: *High scores on measures of academic qualifications are seen as important indicators of staff quality. Such measures should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that they indeed reflect the qualities and types of knowledge desired of candidates.*

> Recommendation 4B: *Districts should seek candidates with high academic qualifications, interpersonal competence, and potential for teaching performance, but they should recognize that objective measures are imperfect indicators of teaching performance. It is important that teachers meet the needs of particular schools. Therefore, as school districts systematize and rationalize screening procedures, they should leave some degree of freedom for decisionmaking at the school site.*

Conclusion Five: *A school district's treatment of candidates during the selection process may cause some teachers to screen themselves into or out of the applicant pool.* Screening procedures in large districts can be lengthy and impersonal. These procedures may discourage the less persistent candidates. Persistence in this context may not be correlated with teaching skills, so districts may be inadvertently screening out talented candidates, including those who are courted by more responsive employers.

> Recommendation 5A: *Prompt, courteous, and responsive treatment of candidates may go a long way toward determining who is hired. Districts should staff personnel offices adequately and train staff, including clerical staff, so that candidates receive appropriate and timely feedback throughout the selection process.*

HIRING

Although districts play a major role in recruitment and screening, hiring decisions are generally made at the school level. This gives rise to logistical problems. **Conclusion Six:** *The process and logistics of teacher hiring may have at least as much influence on the quality of staff hired as do formal screening mechanisms.* For example, it may take until summer for principals to be able to confirm vacancies or for district officials to hear of them. At the Central Office, antiquated manual filing systems inhibit the consideration of an applicant for more than one subject area or grade level. Some principals have as much trouble getting information on applicants as the Central Office does on vacancies.

> Recommendation 6A: *As school districts attend to formal screening mechanisms, they should give equal attention to the sequencing and logistics of the process. A comprehensive but cumbersome process will inevitably result in the loss of candidates.*
>
> Recommendation 6B: *School districts should develop and implement personnel management systems which deliver up-to-date candidate information equally to all decisionmakers.*
>
> Recommendation 6C: *As the competition for teachers increases, school districts should shorten the time span between recruitment and placement.*

Conclusion Seven: *Initial hiring processes tend to screen candidates on the basis of their qualifications; later hiring processes screen candidates on the basis of the characteristics of the vacancy.* Recruitment and screening are often carried out at the district level before the requirements of specific positions at schools are known. Recruitment and screening thus emphasize generally applicable qualifications such as academic ability and interpersonal skills. However, the persons judged most qualified by the district may not be the ones most wanted by the schools to fill specific positions. For instance, the district may recommend two persons who are the most qualified to teach their own subjects and not well qualified to teach each other's, whereas the school might prefer one person who was second-best at both. Schools may also be willing to give up a little teaching expertise for some aptitude in directing extracurricular activities.

> Recommendation 7A: *In the interest of efficiency, school districts should incorporate a consideration of the specific characteristics of vacancies as early in the selection process as possible. The result may be a higher overall quality of candidate hired.*
>
> Recommendation 7B: *School districts may wish to reexamine the multiple roles which they expect teachers to play. To reduce the multiple roles presently expected of classroom teachers, districts may wish to assign auxiliary staff to perform some extracurricular responsibilities.*

PLACEMENT

Conclusion Eight: *School district personnel policies often result in the placement of beginning teachers in the least attractive schools.* Because school districts generally place senior teachers who wish to transfer before new hires, openings for new teachers are often at schools with students who are difficult to teach and with little community support. The result is that the least advantaged students are taught by novice teachers, and novices do not have enough senior teachers around to lend them assistance.

> Recommendation 8A: *School districts should alter incentives so that teachers, as they gain seniority, will not opt to transfer from unattractive to attractive schools.*
>
> Recommendation 8B: *School districts should alter working conditions in high-transfer schools so that teaching in them becomes more attractive to experienced teachers.*
>
> Recommendation 8C: *School districts should disperse beginning teachers among schools of all types or place them in settings where they can receive adequate supervised induction.*

INDUCTION

School districts generally make efforts to improve the quality of beginning teachers as well as to communicate to them the school district's expectations. Such induction programs seem to work best when administrators and senior teachers have time available to help the novice in adjusting to school life and implementing the curriculum.

Conclusion Nine: *Beginning teachers value supervised induction which helps them learn to teach and to learn the expectations of the school district. Supervised induction enhances a teacher's feeling of efficacy and reported propensity to remain in teaching.* The latter is important because in some districts 40 percent of new teachers quit during their first two years. Unfortunately, the effort committed to induction varies from district to district and school to school. In districts in which financial resources are inadequate or in which new teachers are assigned to less desirable schools, senior teachers are not as available to assist new hires.

> Recommendation 9A: *School districts should establish supervised induction programs. This can be achieved by dispersing teachers so that the supervisory resources available in each school are adequate. Or they can create mentor teacher programs to increase the district's capacity for supervised induction; or they can establish specially staffed induction schools where senior teachers supervise beginning teachers.*

If high-turnover schools were designated as induction schools, senior teachers might be more willing to stay there for the mentor status they would receive in doing so. A positive byproduct would be the availability of more resources and more stable teaching for disadvantaged children.

EVALUATION

As applicants are progressively screened, the data used to evaluate them are progressively more expensive. Gleaning qualifications from transcripts and the certification record is less costly than administering a test or conducting an interview. Most expensive of all is classroom observation. More costly information is more likely to be valid, but there is no way to predict performance with certainty. Therefore, instead of trying to maximize information regardless of cost, most districts "satisfice" by stopping short of classroom observation, accepting an increment of uncertainty for a large decrement in resources expended. **Conclusion Ten:** *School districts generally have the opportunity to assess teachers' performance only after they are hired and on the job.*

> Recommendation 10A: *School districts should establish a special evaluation system to assess the performance of first-year teachers. The system should be designed and staffed so that it will engender confidence in the quality of its decisions.*

BEYOND TEACHER SELECTION: THE INDUCTION SCHOOL

The induction school can advance teaching as a profession. It is based on the idea that, although the university can educate the prospective teacher, a teacher can become fully prepared only through extensive, supervised classroom experience. In the induction school, seasoned veterans can help induct novices into the profession.

Once novice teachers have been well-prepared and carefully scrutinized, school districts can allow them to operate as independent professionals—making judgments about what is to be taught, how it is to be taught, and how student learning is to be assessed. Professional teachers—properly trained and with experience—will be granted respect and status by the public. The selection process for teachers is the key juncture at which school systems can upgrade the quality of the teaching force. Professionalizing hiring and induction can create the possibility that entry to teaching will be sufficiently selective and well-supported to sustain a teaching force that will capture public confidence and will enable genuine educational reform.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We acknowledge with appreciation the hundreds of administrators and teachers interviewed in the six districts. Without their willingness to allow us into the districts and their further willingness to share perceptions candidly, this study would not have been possible. We came away with a powerful respect for the complexity of the forces that must be reconciled by personnel officials. As analysts, we can deal with the forces one at a time; administrators do not have that luxury.

Gary Sykes, then of NIE, was the Project Officer responsible for the inception of this study; James Steffensen then took over and sensitively monitored the study to its completion and his retirement, after years of dedicated federal service.

The report profited from the review and critiques provided by colleagues Paul Hill of RAND and Kevin Ryan of Boston University. We owe a continuing debt to Shirley Lithgow, who typed and typed again, and to Nancy Rizor, who typed and provided research assistance.

The senior authors, although they would prefer to share the blame for errors with all those involved in this project, reluctantly accept it all themselves.

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER SELECTION

Over the next decade, American school systems will need to hire well over a million new teachers to fill the vacancies that will be produced by increasing enrollments, retirements, and other turnover. Most of the teachers who will be teaching in American classrooms in 1995 have not yet been hired. To meet this growing demand for new teachers, many school districts will need to revise their selection and hiring procedures to enhance the prospects for attracting, selecting, and retaining well-qualified recruits to teaching.

To acquire the best available teachers, school districts must define positions, advertise and search for qualified candidates, screen them according to well-defined criteria, hire the most qualified, and place them where their skills best fit the needs of the students. A well-designed teacher selection process includes these procedures, enables school districts to influence whether their new hires will remain in teaching, and begins to define the nature of teaching and education expected in the school district.

We undertook this study to describe how teachers are selected—and select themselves into school districts—and trace some of the effects of selection processes on the composition of the teaching force and the operations of schools. In view of probable teacher shortages in the offing and public concern over teacher quality, many school systems will be reassessing their teacher selection practices; certainly they will be paying more attention to them. School district personnel must understand the educational and organizational implications of the teacher selection system that they adopt.

As a product of growing enrollments, pending retirements, and reform initiatives aimed at school improvements, the demand for new teachers will grow substantially. At the same time, the supply of new teachers has been declining for many years. If past trends continue, by 1992 the supply of newly graduated teachers is estimated to fill only about 66 percent of the demand (NCES, 1985, p. 79). In fact, between 1989 and 1993 school districts across the United States will need to hire approximately one million teachers (NCES, 1984). To meet that demand, if traditional retention patterns persist, an estimated 23 percent of each year's college graduates would have to enter public school teaching unless other sources of supply are tapped. However, recent surveys have indicated that less than 7 percent of entering college freshmen declare an interest in teaching as a career (*Education Week*, 1986), and about half of all those who enter teaching leave with five years. Unless the attractiveness of teaching changes and the retention rates increase, serious shortages may result.

Rural and inner-city school districts will likely be the hardest hit by shortages, but all schools and districts will be affected. Competition for teachers will occur among districts. Judging by past experience, school districts will again meet shortages by lowering their hiring standards.

It is important, therefore, to assess how well current teacher selection procedures are likely to serve district needs in the next decade. Many districts are approaching these new conditions from a period in which they were hiring very few teachers, and thus could focus more on screening than on recruitment or retention. However, the usual high levels of attrition of new teachers cannot be so easily borne when supply is low relative to demand. This study explores key elements of the selection process that may be changed to enhance the prospects for improving teacher supply, quality, and retention.

During the selection process, school districts can express how they value teachers and teaching in several ways:

- Through school district procedures used and attitudes exhibited during recruiting, screening, hiring, and placement;
- By defining for new hires the school district's values, beliefs, and goals and framing the conditions of their work; and
- By imparting the school district's conception of teaching and defining professional standards of performance.

THE CONTEXT FOR TEACHER SELECTION

School districts face a variety of teacher supply constraints and conditions when they seek to hire teachers. External considerations include policy and financial constraints imposed by other governmental bodies and preferences imposed by the local community. Internal considerations include a school district's goals, policies and practices, conceptions of teaching, and salaries and working conditions. These conditions influence not only the selection process to be used, but also the teachers to be hired.

Numerous factors affect a school district's ability to find and hire quality teachers.

First, researchers have found that school district characteristics such as geographic location, climate, neighborhood and student characteristics, cost of living, class size, and other working conditions affect teacher supply (Boardman, Darling-Hammond, and Mullin, 1982; Kenny and Denslow, 1980; Antos and Rosen, 1975). Certain kinds of school districts (such as rural and inner-city districts), then, may experience shortages of qualified teachers even when the market indicates a surplus. Obviously, these shortages would be even worse in periods of overall teacher shortages.

Second, as state policy tightens accreditation and certification standards for schools, it reduces the pool of eligible applicants for any given teaching position. More stringent certification requirements exacerbate this situation, given the decline in the academic ability of those who enter teacher education programs and then the teaching force (Weaver, 1979; Vance and Schlechty, 1982). This decline in the talent pool points to profound problems in the occupational structure of teaching: Those "recruits" who do not end up taking a teaching position and "defectors" (those who leave after a few years) tend to be more academically able than those who enter and stay in the teaching force (Vance and Schlecty, 1982).

The recent surge of interest in teacher quality control has led to a wide range of state and local policy changes affecting the certification, evaluation, and tenure of both prospective and currently employed teachers. Although our investigation into teacher selection is primarily concerned with hiring, we recognize that changes in any one of these other elements in the process have implications for hiring as well. If, for example, more rigorous screening takes place before certification, school district selection processes might need to focus less on screening and, perhaps, more on recruitment.

Teacher certification testing is being implemented throughout most of the nation. The Educational Testing Service (ETS) and National Evaluation Services (NES) are providing testing programs for the states in basic skills, subject content, and pedagogy and professional knowledge. Presently, ETS is involved in teacher certification testing in 28 states (primarily with its norm-referenced National Teacher Examinations—core battery and content area) and NES is involved in seven states (primarily with its customized criterion-referenced content area examinations). Plans indicate that certification testing programs will be implemented in eight other states by the end of 1989 and that only six states are not presently implementing, developing, or considering a teacher testing program (Flippo, 1986). These policies can have dramatic effects on teacher supply. Concurrently, there has been a growing movement to treat teaching as a licensed profession by creating professional standards and practices boards.

Clearly, the circumstances surrounding teacher selection will vary for districts that operate in different policy environments. State policies will affect teacher supply and will determine the emphasis that districts must place on one or another stage of the selection process. On the one hand, these policies may support or complicate a local district's hiring tasks by helping to screen potential applicants. On the other hand, they may prevent access to the profession for some potential teachers whom districts might otherwise want to hire.

Third, school districts may have multiple goals for the composition of the teaching force that will affect the selection processes they choose. Both the goals of the school system and the demands of various local constituencies affect the implementation process. Much of the literature on teacher selection examines instruments and techniques for selection without reference to their theoretical underpinnings or to the organizational contexts in which they are to be used. Without such a reference, policymakers cannot easily assess the efficacy of particular selection approaches vis-à-vis their aims, conceptions of teaching, or organizational characteristics.

Fourth, the effectiveness of the teacher selection process hinges on the type of teachers sought by a school district. The evaluation of potential teachers entails assessments of their qualifications, interpersonal characteristics, and even performance. However, such assessments will vary according to the conception of teaching held by the decisionmaker as well as the goals to be served by the selection process. Metaphorically, teachers have been compared to artists (Eisner, 1978), laborers (Mitchell and Kerchner, 1981), managers (Berliner, 1982), and bureaucrats (Wise, 1979), as well as craftspersons and professionals (Broudy, 1956; Lortie, 1975). Each of these metaphors implies a different notion of what a teacher does in a classroom and what qualities a potential effective teacher might be expected to exhibit. Similarly, if a school district places a high priority on college preparation for its students, its teacher selection requirements are likely to differ from those in a district that emphasizes preparation of students for immediate entry into the labor market.

Thus, an investigation of teacher selection policies and their effects must pay careful attention to the organizational context in which the policies are implemented. Research has established the importance of such factors as organizational goals and structures, institutional climate, local political processes, expertise, and leadership style for the ultimate success of a policy (Sproull, 1979; Wildavsky, 1980; Sabatier and Mazmanian, 1979; Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Mann, 1978; Weatherley and Lipsky, 1977). Additionally, the implementation of any school policy (including teacher selection policies) represents a continuous interplay between formal goals and diverse, and sometimes conflicting, informal organizational processes.

Our investigation of teacher selection processes, therefore, assumes that they encompass important situation-specific features and that they are dynamic in nature—that is, that they are vulnerable to influence throughout the course of their implementation and that their effectiveness will depend partly on how they are carried out.

A PRELIMINARY LOOK AT TEACHER SELECTION

A review of the literature reveals five particularly significant areas of research that are relevant to teacher selection: the quality of information about teaching candidates, teacher selection methods and criteria, the effects of teacher selection processes, and teacher induction practices.

Quality of Information about Teaching Candidates

The literature on teacher characteristics has identified no single set of skills, attitudes, interests, or abilities that consistently discriminates between effective and ineffective teachers (King, 1981; Gage, 1963). In particular, measures of intelligence and academic ability have been found to exhibit both positive and negative, though rarely significant, correlations with teaching effectiveness (Morsh and Wilder, 1954; Schalock, 1979). However, other research findings suggest that effective teachers have significant measures of such characteristics as flexibility, adaptability, or creativity (Schalock, 1979; McDonald and Elias, 1976), and must be placed in the type of situation most suited to their personal attributes (Cronbach, 1957, 1967; Joyce and Weil, 1972; Schalock, 1979). Both sets of findings suggest a context-specific view of teacher effectiveness.

There is a strong trend toward the use of standardized tests for initial certification and hiring. This trend is generally based on two elements: the belief that teachers should be able to demonstrate cognitive competence as a prerequisite to successful teaching, and the public's suspicion about the effectiveness of teacher education and training (Harris, 1981). By far the most widely used test is the National Teacher Examinations (NTE). However, a review of studies that have examined the relationship between NTE scores and various measures of teacher performance found that in no case were the two sets of measures related (Quirk et al., 1973).

Some state and locally developed teacher examinations remain unvalidated. However, proponents argue that, regardless of whether such tests exhibit anything more than face validity, the kind of cognitive competence they purport to measure is an important prerequisite to teaching and such testing may reassure a wary public that there is some objective standard for teacher selection.

The difficulties inherent in validating paper-and-pencil tests of competence are shared in other professions as well (Menges, 1975; Brown, 1982). This is partly due to the sample selection bias that occurs when efforts to link test results to on-the-job performance are limited to a sample of only those who have already been hired, and partly due to the nature of such tests themselves. Since these tests can generally measure only a small portion of overall job performance, many states and school systems have begun to pay more attention to measures of actual teaching performance for making certification and hiring decisions.

Research that has sought to identify specific teaching behaviors linked to teaching effectiveness has produced some promising results (Gage, 1978; Rosenshine, 1979). However, these behaviors are more likely to be high-inference variables representative of teaching patterns (such as clarity, variability, and ability to engage students in learning activities) than of discrete, easily measurable actions that can be readily assessed in short-term situational tests. The most extensive process-product study of teacher effectiveness (the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study conducted for California's Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing) found little evidence that discrete teacher behaviors can be linked to student learning. Measures of teaching behaviors have been found to lack stability and generalizability (Shavelson and Dempsey-Atwood, 1976), lending support to a context-specific view of effective teaching.

Other researchers have found that effective teaching behaviors vary for students of different socioeconomic, mental, and psychological characteristics (Cronbach and Snow, 1977; Peterson, 1976; Brophy and Evertson, 1974; 1977) and for different grade levels and subject areas (McDonald and Elias, 1976; Gage, 1978). A related finding is that effective teaching behaviors often bear a distinctly curvilinear relation to achievement. That is, a behavior that is effective when used in moderation can produce significant and negative results when used too much (Peterson and Kauchak, 1982; Soar, 1972), or—as others have found—when applied in the wrong circumstances (see, e.g., McDonald and Elias, 1976; Coker, Medley, and Soar, 1980).

Performance-based assessments of teaching quality seem least likely to generalize to other teaching situations when they rely on low-inference measures of discrete teaching skills and when the teaching context changes markedly from one assessment to the next (Shavelson and Dempsey-Atwood, 1976; McDonald and Elias, 1976). Ratings of student teaching performance have been found to be fairly strong predictors of later teaching performance. Yet, the relationship between these two sets of ratings is affected by the context in which teaching occurs (Schalock, 1979).

In general, research on teaching behaviors suggests that the closer the match between the context in which performance assessment and later teaching occur, the better the performance measure will predict later teaching effectiveness. This indication is consonant with Schalock's (1979) observations about the fidelity of teaching predictors. High-fidelity predictors (e.g., "real life" measures such as student teaching) are more powerful than low-fidelity predictors (e.g., paper-and-pencil tests of teacher competence). However, the use of high- versus low-fidelity measures highlights issues of the costs and benefits of teacher selection processes, "for it is likely that as the fidelity of a measure increases, the cost and logistical demands of obtaining the measure will also increase" (Schalock, 1979, p. 369).

Teacher Selection Methods and Criteria

Of the numerous managerial decisions made by school system administrators, few are more important than those involving teacher selection (Boulton, 1973). Poor selections may have far-reaching consequences for students, other teachers, and the effectiveness of the entire educational enterprise (Young and Allison, 1982).

The interview is one instrument that school administrators prefer to use during the selection process (Bredeson, 1982), as do many administrators in the private sector (Latham et al., 1980). Perhaps that preference should not be surprising, in view of the increase in legal problems over the last decade associated with other selection devices (such as testing instruments) (Arvey, 1979).

Yet, as Young (1984) noted, considering "the frequent use of the interview and the importance of teacher selection, it is surprising that educational researchers have not devoted more attention to this area" (p. 43). Industrial and organizational psychologists, however, have been studying the employment interview for over six decades in an effort to determine the reliability and validity of the judgments based upon it (Arvey and Campion, 1982). Unfortunately, in several reviews of the literature, the evidence has not been encouraging: The employment interview is not a promising selection device—especially with regard to its predictive validity (Arvey and Campion, 1982; Reilly and Chao, 1982; Niece, 1983; Young, 1984).

Young (1984) noted that most researchers have addressed the issue of interview validity by correlating an interview score with some criterion of job performance. He asserted that their findings were disappointing for several reasons—but primarily because "validity coefficients were generally low and accounted for only a small portion of the variance in job performance and the correlation coefficients failed to provide any insight relative to why the interview was found to be valid or invalid" (p. 43).

A few studies have found that the careful linking of job analysis and interview content have had beneficial effects on interviewer reliability and validity (Arvey and Campion, 1982). The positive correlations derived from these few studies were significant—ranging from .30 to .46 for concurrent validity and .33 to .39 for predictive validity. However, much like the previous research in this area (Wagner, 1949; Mayfield, 1964), most studies have concluded consistently that interviews generally have insufficient reliability and validity for use in personnel selection (Reilly and Chao, 1982). A review of recent studies estimated an average validity of 12 coefficients at .19 (Reilly and Chao, 1982).

Unfortunately, most employment interviews are limited by the interviewer. Acuff (1981) noted that the average interview lasts less than an hour and the interviewer talks about 80 percent of the time. Bucalo (1978) noted that the interviewer's questions are often not relevant or job-related and do not elicit the applicant's knowledge in regard to specific job qualifications. Finally, Heflich (1981) asserted that the interviewer's major dilemma involves the inability to match the right person with the right position. This is attributed to the interviewer's lack of skill in gathering more than one-dimensional data during the interview.

To compensate for some of these deficiencies in the "typical" selection interview, some school districts are beginning to rely on structured interview systems. Interviewers are trained to ask predetermined questions that are subsets of "theme" areas related to what are believed to be characteristic of effective teachers. Most of these "theme" areas relate to an individual's interpersonal skills (e.g., themes might include creativity, motivation, flexibility, and dependability). Interviewers interpret and score a prospective teacher's responses according to predetermined criteria and standards. The developers of these structured interview systems claim that the instruments, when used in conjunction with other hiring strategies, can increase the probability of hiring more highly rated teachers (e.g., see Muller, 1981). On the other hand, other researchers have concluded that these structured interview systems do not enhance the effectiveness of the teacher selection process (e.g., see Yoder, 1976; Smith, 1980; Mickler and Soloman, 1985). Nonetheless, the interview reveals insights and information about prospective teachers that other selection strategies cannot, and it continues to be the most widely used of all personnel selection devices.

Finally, school system administrators must determine their own selection criteria. Smith (1980) has noted three critical criteria: School systems must determine if the candidate has mastery of fundamental knowledge, has mastery of instructional (including interpersonal) skills necessary to be an effective teacher, and will use their skills and knowledge to best fit the needs of the system and the school. The degree to which school systems assess the mix of these criteria will determine the quality of the teacher hired. Little research has been done to assess the basis upon which school system administrators select teachers. However, some researchers have concluded that the most academically able are *not* necessarily the most likely to be hired (Weaver, 1979; Perry, 1981; Berry, 1984). School system administrators do not always hire the "brightest" teachers because they believe that they do not possess other characteristics and skills required of effective teachers in their districts: ability to work with diverse student and parent groups, ability and desire to work in extracurricular assignments (especially athletics), and aptitude that meshes with the expectations of the local community (Berry and Hare, 1985).

The Effects of Teacher Selection Processes

Effective teacher selection depends on the predictive power of the measures used and their consonance with district- and school-level goals and conceptions of teaching. One example from the teaching-effects literature illustrates this point. Teaching behaviors that appear to increase students' achievement on standardized tests and factual examinations are nearly opposite from those that appear to increase complex cognitive learning, problem-solving ability, and creativity (McKeachie and Kulik, 1975; Soar and Soar, 1976; Soar, 1977; Peterson, 1979). Similarly, other research suggests that desirable affective outcomes of education result from teaching behaviors that are vastly different from those prescribed for increasing student achievement on standardized tests of cognitive skills (Traub et al., 1973; McKeachie and Kulik, 1975; Horwitz, 1979; Peterson, 1979).

This finding suggests that the effectiveness of teacher selection processes is closely related to system goals as well as the goals and conditions pertinent to the actual teaching assignment. A judgment of whether qualified applicants have been selected must seek answers to the question of "qualified for doing what?" Goal specification is critical to evaluation of effects.

Unintended effects of selection processes must also be considered, along with effects on goals other than the hiring of well-qualified applicants. For example, does the selection process:

- Provide fair access to teaching positions for different types of candidates (e.g., minority versus white, local versus out-of-state, experienced versus inexperienced)?
- Result in increased or decreased satisfaction with the composition and performance of the teaching force on the part of various constituency groups?
- Provide equitable treatment for inservice and newly hired teachers with respect to teaching assignments?
- Result in the balanced distribution of various teacher types across schools and programs?
- Result in hiring decisions being made in an efficient and timely manner in order to minimize the program disruptions caused by teacher turnover or vacant positions?
- Enhance the successful induction of new teachers into the school system?
- Result in the hiring of teachers who are likely to stay with the system, thus justifying the human capital investment made during selection and immediately thereafter?

Research is of limited help in guiding the actions of school practitioners, who face realistic constraints on the types and quality of information they can gather about candidates, underdeveloped methods and ambiguous criteria for teacher selection, and political and financial costs in implementing a chosen teacher selection system. In addition, whatever teacher selection system is chosen, practitioners and policymakers alike must recognize that the system has to operate within its particular organizational context. Otherwise, they cannot easily assess whether the system will perform according to expectations. With theory, knowledge gained from other districts' experiences, and knowledge of their own districts, practitioners and other policymakers can make informed estimates of the system's probable effectiveness and effects.

Teacher Induction Practices

Teachers learn a great deal about teaching in their first years on the job. The first year of teaching is an especially critical transition period (Tisher, 1978; Ryan, 1979; McDonald, 1980). As McDonald (1980) observes,

> For most teachers, the initial experiences of teaching are traumatic events out of which they emerge defeated, depressed, constrained, or with a sense of efficacy, confidence, and growing sureness in teaching skills. (p. 5)

School districts can influence those experiences through the way it treats new teachers, notably with helpful teacher induction programs.

Teacher induction programs can improve the quality of new hires and the effectiveness of their teaching. Presently, most teacher induction program models focus on the assessment of the observable instructional skills of new teachers. Most of these models are based upon the belief that intensive observation and evaluation during a teacher's first years provide a more valid indicator than the evaluations conducted during his or her teacher training program (Soar, Medley, and Coker, 1983).

Other models, however, based upon the belief that new hires have been properly screened and trained, are designed to ease the transition from student to professional (Schlechty, 1985). Unfortunately, as Fox and Singletary (1986) have noted, "few teacher induction program proposals focus on providing the beginning teacher with support and assistance in easing the transition from student to teacher; few focus on the goals of developing a reflective orientation and the skills essential to self-evaluation" (p. 12). In fact, many school system induction programs are nothing more than increased observations and ratings and orientation sessions that inform new teachers about personnel and curriculum matters.

The lack of adequate support for new teachers is exacerbated by the conditions in which they work. As McLaughlin et al. (1986) have noted:

> New teachers are often given those students or courses with which experienced teachers do not wish to deal. Instead of giving beginning teachers a nurturing environment in which to grow, we throw them into a war zone where both the demands and the mortality rate are excessively high. It is really not surprising that almost one-third of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching. (p. 424)

The authors add that:

> The [working] conditions that negatively affect the effectiveness and the success of veteran teachers are even more devastating to young recruits. Beginning teachers strongly desire interactions with colleagues, the support of their principals, teaching assignments that are consistent with their competencies, a stable working environment, and access to the tools of their trade. (p. 424)

THE FOCUS OF THIS STUDY

We designed this study to assess teacher selection practices with a view to analyzing how teacher selection can be used to improve the quality of the teaching force. In this report, we describe current selection procedures and practices in six school districts, and trace some of the effects of the selection process.

In Sec. II we summarize the case study findings across four dimensions: policy and organizational context, organizational characteristics, selection processes, and effects of teacher selection.[1] In doing so, we address how external and internal policies affect teacher supply and demand at the local school district level; how formal and informal organizational variables collectively shape the goals for selection; how the everyday actions of administrators and teachers influence the selection process; and how the teacher selection process produces both intended and unintended outcomes.

Section III assesses teacher selection practices using five analytical themes.

Section IV presents some conclusions about teacher selection practices and makes recommendations for improved practice.

METHODOLOGY

The six school districts scrutinized in this study were selected with the assistance of representatives of most of the major education associations.[2] They were asked to identify school districts that pay careful attention to their selection of teachers, or have highly developed selection practices. They were told that it was not necessary to attempt to determine, in advance, that the selection practices were effective in achieving the district's personnel acquisition objectives. The panel nominated 40 districts. The director of personnel in the nominated districts was telephoned by a member of the RAND staff. Information was gathered concerning the characteristics of the district and its selection process. The staff assessed the districts according to the following criteria:

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[1] For more details on case study findings, see A. E. Wise et al., *Effective Teacher Selection: From Recruitment to Retention—Case Studies*, The RAND Corporation, N-2513-NIE/CSTP, January 1987.

[2] The members of the panel (and their then current affiliations) were: Dr. Herman Behling, Maryland State Department of Education; Dr. Herman Goldberg, American Association of School Administrators; Ms. Joanne Goldsmith, National Association of State Boards of Education; Dr. James Keefe, The National Association of Secondary School Principals; Dr. Willie J. Kimmons, University of the District of Columbia; Ms. Lucille Maurer, Delegate, State of Maryland; Dr. Bernard McKenna, National Education Association; Dr. James Mecklenburger, National School Boards Association; Ms. Margaret Montgomery, National Association of Elementary School Principals; Dr. William Pierce, Council of Chief State School Officers; and Ms. Marilyn Rauth, American Federation of Teachers.

1. The district had a person in charge of selection or a clear organizational structure for selection decisions.
2. The district had a selection procedure that has been publicly articulated or at least can be precisely described.
3. The district had been using its procedure in recent years, that is, had been hiring a significant number or percentage of teachers.
4. The procedure had been in use for at least several years.
5. The district received multiple nominations.
6. Study team members had knowledge of state policies and labor market conditions affecting the district's teacher selection process.

In addition, in compiling its recommendations to the panel, the staff sought diversity in district size, enrollment trends, community type, pupil population, region of the country, labor market conditions, types of selection tools and processes, and also in the degree of centralization/decentralization of the selection process.

One or two members of the staff spent approximately one week conducting interviews in each district. We began with a detailed interview of the director of personnel followed by interviews with other Central Office staff including the superintendent, members of the staff involved in selection, the director of curriculum and instruction, the director of research, and others deemed appropriate. Local teachers' organization officials were also interviewed.

Staff then visited five or six schools, representative of the district, to interview principals, teachers hired in the last few years, and more senior teachers (including the teachers' organization building representative). In addition, staff gathered documents and statistics on teaching force characteristics and recruitment and selection. Each case study director began with a common set of questions[3] concerning the context of the district, its selection policies and practices, the supply and demand situation faced, recruitment efforts, selection policy implementation, post-hiring practices, and the effects of selection as perceived by recently hired teachers. However, each director was free to follow any promising paths of inquiry.

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[3] The case studies were directed as follows: Durham County, North Carolina (Phillip C. Schlechty); East Williston, New York (Arthur E. Wise); Hillsborough, Florida (Arthur E. Wise); Mesa, Arizona (David Berliner); Montgomery County, Maryland (Linda Darling-Hammond); and Rochester, New York (Emil Haller).

II. SUMMARY OF CASE STUDY FINDINGS[1]

MESA

Policy and Organizational Context

The Mesa (Arizona) Unified School District serves approximately 44,000 pupils with its 2500 teachers. Mesa is Arizona's third largest city, approximately 15 miles from Phoenix. It is known for its Southwest lifestyle, recent economic growth, high median family income, and low-cost housing.

In addition to Mesa being a desirable place to live, the district's well known community support enhances its ability to attract teachers. In large measure, the public's confidence in the Mesa schools can be attributed to a homogeneous culture (influenced by a large Mormon population), a high percentage of middle-class families who value education, and stable school policies that are not subject to "fadism."

The district also offers competitive benefits and salaries (a range of $16,000 to $33,000), has easy access to a major state university with a large college of education, and is located close to industries that attract professionals, many of whose spouses are teachers.

However, certain state policies may affect Mesa's ability to attract teachers—especially those from out of state. The State of Arizona requires a teacher proficiency exam (which assesses basic competencies in reading, writing, and math), two reading courses, and a demonstration of knowledge of the state constitution in order for teachers to be certified. While these have affected the district's selection process only minimally, two other policies may have more significant impact. First, in determining the salary of an incoming out-of-state teacher, Mesa can credit only a maximum of five years experience. Second, Mesa cannot pay for travel expenses in recruiting and relocating teachers. These policies, dictated by state law, may limit the district's capacity to recruit teachers in the future.

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[1] This section describes the workings of the six district selection systems. Some readers may prefer to skip to Sec. III, where the six systems are analyzed.

Organizational Characteristics

The Mesa Unified School District has had a history of organizational decentralization—especially with regard to its selection of teachers. However, with its continuous rapid growth (school enrollment is expected to increase by 25 percent over the next five years), large applicant pool (approximately 3000), relatively high turnover among its younger teachers (an average of 15 percent for those with less than five years experience), high percentage of internal teacher mobility, and the need to fill approximately 250 to 300 vacancies annually, Mesa has been under considerable pressure over the last decade to centralize its personnel functions.

These pressures have led to an increased centralization of authority for curriculum and staff development as well as for the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel (ASFP).

The district's response to meeting the demands of the "back-to-basics" movement has resulted in drill and practice in the classroom and the monitoring of teachers' adherence to a scope and sequence chart. Although the district intends to have unit administrators in charge of the staff development of their teachers, it has for all practical purposes centralized this function. The Central Office mandates two in-service training programs for newly hired teachers and offers courses for certification renewal.

With an increased need to select prospective teachers who have a diversity of talent as well as strong interpersonal skills, the ASFP now provides a significant gate-keeping function in the hiring process. In eliminating the idiosyncratic biases inherent in decentralized hiring by principals, Mesa has implemented three personnel practices to achieve its teacher selection goals.

First, the focal point of teacher selection in Mesa is the initial screening interview conducted by the Central Office. This screening device, the Mesa Educator Perceiver Interview (MEPI), is a purportedly scientific instrument that measures a prospective teacher's values, purpose, and beliefs about human development and interaction. A recent addition to the instrument reflects the district's interest in instructional processes. While candidates are officially rated on the basis of their credentials, experience, and recommendations, their score on the MEPI is paramount. A poor score will essentially eliminate a prospective teacher from consideration. Importantly, the MEPI mirrors the district's concern that teachers have strong affective orientations.

Second, the Central Office requires that all newly hired teachers (regardless of teaching experience) participate in the Educator Skills

Program, whose purpose is to ensure that the teachers have mastered a set of instructional skills that the district considers essential. These skills include writing objectives, designing activities and tests, revising programs, and managing classrooms. Paper and pencil tests as well as direct observation of the teacher's performance in the classroom are used to determine the extent to which a teacher possesses the requisite skills. The district offers classes directly related to the skills tests; provide the information needed to master the skills. Probationary teachers must demonstrate a mastery of these skills in order to be recommended for tenure. In some respects, the program may be a reflection of the district's perception that teacher training institutions are of low quality.

Third, the Central Office requires that all teachers new to the district participate in the Teachers Inservice Program Sessions. The purpose of this program is to provide information to new teachers as well as to enhance their skills and knowledge. The program imparts information regarding specifics about the district's curriculum. For the most part, new teachers could not be expected to know this information before their employment. New teachers must complete a minimum of six clock-hours of the program's sessions by mid-term of their third year in Mesa.

This increase in centralized authority in the selection process does not appear to be a problem for principals. First, with a great deal of faith in the screening devices (especially the MEPI) and consensus over the goals for selection among administrators, there is shared vision of the teacher selection process in Mesa. Second, the majority of principals note that since they have "other things" to worry about, the present recruitment and selection system works well for them.

Selection Processes

While administrators conduct formal campus visits and distribute recruiting literature, they hire mostly experienced teachers who are attracted to the area. As previously mentioned, the district keeps about 3000 applicants on file, choosing to interview approximately one-half of the applicant pool. Although the pool is shrinking in special education, math, and science, district administrators can "recruit" and select these high-demand teachers if they do so by the spring or early summer. On occasion, a top candidate will be offered a choice of schools in which to teach as an inducement to choose Mesa. This recruiting tool is used sparingly, but can be significant. There is a clear hierarchy in teachers' preferences for working at some schools and with certain principals.

Mesa has a five-step formal selection process. First, a candidate must request and complete an application. Then they must provide additional information to complete the employment file: letters of recommendation, college transcripts, and a record of their responses to the MEPI.

Second, the ASFP reviews each file by checking references and credentials and by assessing the candidates' scores on the MEPI. Approximately 30 to 50 percent of the applicants will achieve the preferred cut-off score of 50 percent correct responses. Using these assessments, the ASFP assigns each candidate a categorical rating from I to IV.

Third, a building principal will request that a position be filled. However, before a principal can consider outside candidates, the district's sizable internal transfer pool first must be emptied. (Many of Mesa's teachers will enter the system teaching in the outlying areas and wait until a vacancy develops at a school closer to their homes or the center of town.) Once outside candidates can be considered, the Central Office prepares 10 to 15 files for the principal to review, from which he or she will select about five candidates to interview.

Fourth, the site interview is conducted by the principal. Some principals are assisted by appropriate grade-level and subject area teachers in the interview process, but most interviews take place in the summer when teachers are not available. Non-local candidates must be willing to travel to Mesa at their own expense. Because of that fact, plus principals' preference for hiring local candidates, they are seldom hired.

Finally, the principal will recommend a candidate for employment to the ASFP, who effects the hiring. However, if the ASFP already has made a commitment to hire a candidate (e.g., during a recruiting visit to a college), subtle pressure is placed on principals to accept that individual.

Through each of these steps, a candidate's personal and interpersonal skills are given primary consideration. Although the site interview is to screen for technical competence (both academic and pedagogical), principals tend to examine more closely a candidate's capacity for "enthusiasm, warmth, and caring" toward students and "fitting in well" with the local school culture. Administrators in Mesa carefully screen teachers on the basis of interpersonal skills because they believe that human interactive skills—unlike academic and instructional competencies—cannot be taught to teachers.

Although administrators assess primarily a candidate's interpersonal skills, many wish they could collect better information on a candidate's teaching performance. Principals commonly complain that the selection process does not include classroom observations of prospective teachers. As one principal noted, "it would be tremendous if we had a corps of people to go around and visit applicants." But most administrators resign themselves to the fact that classroom observations would be "too time-consuming and expensive."

However, external assessments such as academic achievement and recommendations from previous employers are not valued highly by administrators as sources of information regarding the candidate's qualifications. First, administrators tend to believe that candidates with "straight As" from prestigious colleges will not necessarily make the best teachers. They believe that the brighter teachers are, the more likely they are not to have patience to work with average students. In addition, bright candidates, especially those who were recent college graduates, are held in disdain by some principals who believe that they leave teaching too quickly. Second, administrators do not weight letters of recommendation very highly, claiming that candidates can always find three people who will say something positive about them.

In most respects, the selection process in Mesa is highly formal. Although some teachers are "put off" by the formal selection procedures, most accept the formality as characteristic of working for a quality school district. For some teachers, the difficulty in getting hired in Mesa is analogous to an initiation. Thus, after a difficult initiation, teachers may be more likely to value the school district.

However, not all teachers experience positive initiation to the school district. First, the Central Office may handle candidates much too impersonally. A number of teachers reported that there was no personal attention given to them during the selection process. Second, the Central Office allegedly sometimes mishandles important communications with candidates during the selection process—forcing potential teachers to wait unnecessarily for the district's decision. Finally, some experienced teachers reported that Central Office personnel did not really know how to treat them when they were new to the district. School officials did not handle them as if they were experienced professionals. Instead, these teachers were treated as if their "track records didn't count for much."

As previously noted, once hired, all teachers new to the district are required to participate in the Educator Skills Program (ESP) and the Teacher Inservice Program Sessions (TIPS). ESP and TIPS are useful for new teachers. However, for experienced teachers new to the district, the ESP may be superfluous and may communicate to them that their professional experience is not valued by the district.

The district's evaluation program is intertwined with the ESP, requiring both classroom observations and consultations by supervisors, site administrators, and resource teachers. However, each school has its own particular system of accomplishing the evaluations and each administrator has varying amounts of time to spend on observations and evaluations. Therefore, the quality of evaluation of new teachers in Mesa varies considerably.

For the most part, site administrators and resource teachers help integrate new hires into the system. In some elementary schools, there are "buddy" systems, whereby an experienced teacher will take a new teacher under his or her wing. There is a great deal of "this is the way we do it around here," since principals attempt to develop a consistent ethos in their schools with regard to student discipline, parental relationships, and academic focus.

Effects of Teacher Selection

Mesa enjoys several advantages for attracting teachers, including nearness to colleges and industries, the region's culture, the district's stable leadership, and community support for its public schools. Although state policies seemingly could work to Mesa's disadvantage, they appear to have had little effect on teacher selection so far.

In one view, the selection process is centralized; in another view, it is decentralized. In fact, it serves both organizational and personal needs for administrators at all levels to be able to exercise influence. However, in recent attempts to strengthen both instructional processes and teacher selection, Mesa has significantly centralized authority. The effects appear to be varied and wide-ranging.

First, with increased centralization in its personnel functions, the district has enhanced consensus among administrators and teachers regarding its educational goals as well as its selection procedures.

Second, the system protects principals from special interest groups that pressure the school district. However, by centralizing the selection process, school districts limit the principals' discretion in choosing their own staff and thus in selecting candidates who best "fit" their schools.

Third, the formality and complexity of the selection processes engender the experience of an "initiation" rite. Thus, teachers are more likely to value association with the school district. On the other hand, some teachers are "put off" by the formality of the teacher selection process. Thus, by highly centralizing (and formalizing) the selection process, school districts may discourage some teachers from applying.

Fourth, because of administrator beliefs and practices in the district and state legislative mandates, there are prevalent biases in Mesa's teacher selection process, whose effects appear to be enhanced by the increased centralization of selection processes. On the one hand, the MEPI, a centralized screening device, is designed to test the affective orientation of prospective teachers. The design and scoring of this instrument tend to downgrade those candidates who answer the interview questions with responses revealing an academic orientation. This effect is reinforced by the tendency of some administrators to devalue a candidate's college grades and the college's reputation.

On the other hand, state policies and staff development requirements inhibit the consideration of out-of-state and experienced teachers. The district cannot pay for travel or relocation expenses for out-of-state teachers. More important, newly hired out-of-state teachers cannot be paid for more than five years of experience. In effect, these centralized policies may diminish the potential pool of qualified candidates.

Fifth, highly centralized, internal transfer policies, coupled with teacher and school characteristics, result in a rather slow hiring process. Principals must first select senior internal candidates before considering new applicants. Additionally, teachers in Mesa tend to move internally quite a bit, selecting schools closer to their homes or those with better reputations. Given the length of time it takes to empty the internal transfer pool, Mesa loses a portion of its applicants to positions elsewhere.

Despite these trends, Mesa still manages to hire the quality of teacher it desires. The district's reliance upon passive recruiting and its emphasis upon nonacademic selection criteria have not prevented the district from choosing qualified and talented teachers. It is well understood that variables extrinsic to the school district—such as geography and culture—enhance the district's capacity to select talented teachers. Also, it is well understood that Central Office administrators, principals, and teachers are very comfortable with the policies and practices of the district. Increased centralization and formalization have limited principals' ability to select teachers, but principals are not resentful and they believe that their input still makes a difference. This is not surprising, because principals are more concerned with matters other than recruitment and selection. In Mesa, these personnel functions are largely the responsibility of the ASFP.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Policy and Organizational Context

The Montgomery County, Maryland, Public School System (MCPS) serves approximately 90,000 students with its 6100 teachers. Approximately 27 percent of today's students belong to minority groups. Over the last decade, the student population has both decreased and become more diverse. During the mid-1970s, the district served 130,000 students, and during the late 1960s, only 6 percent of the students belonged to minority groups. Students are high-achieving: Approximately 75 percent of the district's graduates go on to college.

Montgomery County is an affluent, suburban community just outside Washington, D.C. The district's proximity to the District of Columbia and its relationship to a large, highly transient, governmental work force has positively affected its supply of teachers. In recent years, a large percentage of the annual entering teaching force has consisted of spouses (usually wives) of government officials or other professionals who have recently moved to the area. However, the district has seen its pool of applicants shrink dramatically over the last fifteen years. For example, the district received 5765 applications in 1969–70 but only 2141 in 1984.

The high cost of living in the county and the relatively low teachers' salaries strongly inhibit the district's ability to attract prospective teachers who are single or who are the sole source of household income. In 1984, the district's salary schedule, ranging from $15,561 to $35,824, ranked fourth out of the eight school systems in the metropolitan Washington, D.C., area. In 1985, beginning teachers' salaries ranked last among the area's school districts.

Additionally, the County Council has, in the past, restricted the district's ability to hire experienced teachers with advanced education by mandating a ceiling on average entering teacher salaries. Although this policy has been since rescinded, the salary schedule still sets a maximum salary grade for entry. This is surprising, in view of the high total average per pupil expenditure ($4100) in the district.

Nearly 75 percent of the district's 6100 teachers have more than ten years' experience, reflecting the relatively low levels of hiring in recent years and the preference for hiring experienced teachers. The teaching staff has become more stable, with attrition dropping every year since 1969. In 1984, the district's attrition rate (excluding leaves) was 4.2 percent. In 1969, it was 14.7 percent. Most of this recent turnover is among the less experienced staff. Although turnover has decreased in recent years, more teachers tend to leave in late summer or even during the school year, exacerbating the demands placed upon the personnel division of the Central Office. Further pressure is placed on Central Office personnel through the dramatic increases in internal transfers (both voluntary and involuntary) resulting from geographic shifts in the county's population. Furthermore, a number of teachers go on leave each year; the annual rate has averaged 3.9 percent since 1969.

As more minority students entered Montgomery County, the district found it more difficult to desegregate its schools. The district created voluntary magnet schools in the most heavily minority area of the county—reflecting the district's sensitivity to promoting racial balance and high-quality educational programs. Another reflection of this sensitivity is the district's considerable efforts to hire minority faculty. The district has increased its percentage of minority teachers by 7 percentage points since 1971 (from 4.9 percent to 11.9 percent). However, some schools' faculties remain imbalanced in terms of racial composition.

Organizational Characteristics

Over the last two decades, the MCPS has made major commitments to the recruitment and selection of teachers. However, efforts to recruit and select teachers have not been emphasized concurrently with each other and have tended to be reactive rather than anticipatory. The district's recruitment and selection efforts have been characterized, therefore, as a "pendulum that is always out of synch" with labor market trends. At the time of this study, several organizational characteristics affected the district's ability to face a tightening labor market. These organizational characteristics relate primarily to the district's changes in recruiting strategies, emphasis on "objective" interviewing and testing, internal transfer policies, and management information system.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Montgomery County recruited applicants at 125 colleges and universities in 21 states, solicited applicants from its pool of student teacher interns, advertised in prestigious newspapers, and contacted prospective teachers regularly through professional organizations. Additionally, the district had uncoupled beginning salaries to induce teachers in short-supply fields. These efforts had been effective.

However, with the onset of teacher surpluses in the 1970s and the fact that the largest percentage of the district's "recruits" had approached the system directly, Montgomery County has modified its recruiting efforts. Currently, the district targets its recruiting efforts on particular colleges according to the number and quality of teachers it has employed from the colleges, the quality of their teacher training programs, and the special programs they offer. Although the district still attends regional consortia and national conferences, most other recruiting activities have been curtailed. This curtailment reflects the emphasis of a 1969–70 personnel report urging that more attention be given to screening in the selection process. Both the present interview and testing programs emerged from this new emphasis.

Upon completion and review of their application file, prospective teachers are interviewed and tested by the district's Division of Personnel. Testing analysts, along with a committee of teachers and principals, developed a structured interview that reflects the district's view of effective teaching characteristics. These characteristics focus on seven interpersonal dimensions and are the basis for situation-specific interview questions: empathy, adjustability, role innovation, objectivity, teaching drive, democratic orientation, and firmness. Trained interviewers rank and score responses, looking for those that are balanced, flexible, *and* not too extreme.

Montgomery County has developed its own elementary and secondary testing program. The program has evolved since its inception in 1972 to include most teachers. The elementary test, a 100-item multiple-choice exam, assesses the English language skills and the mathematics, science, and social studies knowledge of all elementary school candidates. The secondary test, a 90-item multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and text-editing exam, assesses the English language and mathematics skills of all secondary school candidates. The secondary test has been validated (using volunteers among currently employed secondary teachers as study participants).

Principals see the elementary and secondary tests as serious examinations because they believe the cut-off scores are "high" and the test items are "rather difficult." However, some principals believe that the testing program may not provide the most valid assessment of an applicant's knowledge and how this knowledge relates to teaching. Principals and teachers question the tests' validity on two counts. On the one hand, since all secondary teachers must take a test that covers several content areas, a high school French teacher applicant may be removed from the employment pool because of poor performance on the math portion of the test. Second, since some tests are formatted and constructed to assess broad subject areas, applicants with specific college majors may have difficulty earning a good score. For example, an English literature/composition major may have difficulty with the English test since it focuses on knowledge of formal rules of grammar in a multiple-choice format and does not require a writing sample which would allow the candidate to reflect his or her literary knowledge and writing ability.

Third, principals may fill a vacancy with a new hire only after the internal transfer pool has been emptied. In Montgomery County, this pool has grown dramatically over the last decade—approximately 1000 per year. Not only are there more transfers to place than new hires, but also there are three distinct categories of transfers: involuntary, employees returning from leave, and voluntary. Each of these transfer categories requires separate placement efforts by the Central Office at various times during the school year. Unfortunately, it is often July or later when all transfers are placed and many prospective new teachers have taken offers from other districts by this time. Some of Montgomery County's nearby competitors hire early and centrally. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that many principals will utilize delay tactics in hiring in order not to be forced to select from the transfer pool.

Finally, the district's management information system may inhibit the efficient flow of information during the selection process. First, the two staffing teams that process applications are organized by geographic areas of the county rather than by type of school or subject matter. Since an applicant's file can be analyzed by only one staffing specialist at a time, principals have been known to "discover" candidates after being told no qualified applicants were available. Second, the Division of Personnel essentially uses an "antiquated" filing system for its applicants. File folders are stacked according to subject area for review by staff members and principals. Thus, a "science" applicant with a significant background in math may be overlooked by some staffing specialists and principals.

Selection Processes

As previously noted, the Central Office actively recruits in order to build an applicant pool from which to screen teachers. In some cases, the centralized selection processes of (1) reviewing candidates' credentials, (2) interviewing and testing, and (3) referring candidates to local sites enhances a principal's efficacy in selecting teachers.

(1) Staffing specialists in the Division of Personnel review all applications and decide whether to invite a candidate for an interview. A staff specialist, acting as an agent for Maryland, will ascertain whether an applicant has the proper qualifications for certification. This expedites what is generally a lengthy process. Yet, given the diverse, stringent, and somewhat arcane course requirements for teacher certification in the State of Maryland, many out-of-state candidates (and even some in-state college graduates) have difficulty getting over this initial hurdle. For example, Maryland does not have reciprocity

certification agreements with other states. Once certification status is determined, a staffing specialist will evaluate an applicant's college transcripts and references and rate his or her academic qualifications.

(2) The next steps, the Central Office structured interview and the subject matter test, occur simultaneously. In the recent past, the Central Office determined a passing score on these examinations, whereby a failing score could eliminate a candidate from being considered by a principal. However, with the present teacher shortages (even in such subjects as social studies), the Central Office has reduced the possibility of any one single criterion eliminating a candidate from the available pool. At this time, the Division of Personnel has developed a weighting formula to rank candidates according to the various criteria. The components of this formula are: structured interview (.30), tests (.30), professional reference (.20), college grades in subject area (.10), other college grades (.05), and personal traits (.05).

(3) Finally, those principals who have developed a positive relationship with a staffing specialist tend to wait for referrals from Central Office. For those principals who do not have the luxury of time to review file folders, this is an important centralized function. For at least three reasons, however, some principals tend to seek out candidates themselves and then have them screened at the Central Office after the fact.

First, there is, from the principals' viewpoint, considerable variability in the knowledge and skill of the staffing specialists. For example, some specialists are reported to refer candidates who would not really be interested in teaching in a particular school or had already accepted a position elsewhere. With regard to the former, principals note that some candidates would not "fit in" well with their type of school. With regard to the latter, principals report that, in the time lag between the recruiting and hiring periods, the district loses teachers because no one from Central Office contacted the candidates.

Second, the staffing specialists must also place internal transfers and those returning from leave. However, in doing so, they may have to encourage principals to take such individuals before hiring a new candidate. In some cases, principals are known to skillfully remove their weaker teachers by forcing them into the pool of internal transfers. In turn, other principals are known to go through "machinations" (such as encouraging teachers to resign late or not posting a vacancy until a suitable replacement is found), in order to avoid having to choose certain teachers from the pool.

Third, principals who rely on Central Office referrals tend to believe that there is an insufficient number of quality applicants, especially minority applicants and applicants in fields like mathematics, science, and foreign languages. Additionally, in the estimation of the principals, many of these referred applicants are poorly qualified to meet the needs of their schools.

Perhaps principals attempt to circumvent the Central Office because of the decrease in the size of the applicant pool. On the other hand, some of their frustrations may be due to inadequate communication between Central Office and the site administrators. It is important to note that the personnel office lost considerable staff in the 1970s. However, some of the communication problems are noted to relate directly to unanswered telephone calls and the antiquated "piling" of applicant files at the Central Office. Nonetheless, principals who make a real effort to recruit and screen candidates appear to find teachers who meet their needs.

Principals who do not rely on Central Office for candidates recruit and screen teachers through their informal networks. In most cases, this means making deals with other principals (regarding internal transfers), recruiting candidates through other teachers, and hiring through the informal labor pool of substitutes and student teachers. In doing so, principals are more likely to hire "known quantities"—those whom they have observed in a previous working relationship or those who have been recommended by trusted colleagues. In fact, some teachers will note that "the only way to get a teaching job (in the district) is to be a substitute."

Many principals are drawn to hire "known quantities" because they do not consider standard measures (i.e., tests, transcripts, and certification) to be the most valid indicators of later effective teaching. By relying on informal assessments, principals can better determine whether or not candidates possess other important characteristics related to effective teaching. For many principals, these characteristics include enthusiasm, persistence, sensitivity to differing demands of parents and students, nurturing qualities, creativity, the ability to work as a team player, and an interest in extracurricular activities.

Once this selection process is completed, principals complete a standard evaluation form and submit a recommendation to the Division of Personnel. After reviewing position control documents to verify if a vacancy exists, the Central Office will effect the hiring. However, both the Director of Staffing and the Director of Personnel must review and approve the principal's recommendation.

Once teachers are hired, the support for them also varies. At the time of this study, MCPS did not have a formal system-wide induction program for new teachers. However, the district expects that each school's resource teachers or department heads will play a role in meeting the needs of new hires. The district's recognition of expertise in these senior teachers provides a mechanism for supporting new teachers. In some schools, new teachers meet with their resource teacher or department head regularly for planning and advice.

Such assistance by senior teachers may provide significant benefits for teacher retention. New teachers reported that their plans to remain in teaching were influenced by the type of support received during their initial years of teaching. They believed that their feelings of efficacy would be enhanced by support provided from seasoned teachers. Not only does help for the novice enhance the probability of their teaching effectiveness and retention, but it is also a recruitment incentive. Several new teachers reported that they selected the school in which they were employed because they knew they would receive help and support from a resource teacher or department head.

Yet, in other schools, obstacles such as class-scheduling conflicts prevent a new teacher from developing a productive relationship with his or her resource teacher or department head. Most resource teachers only have one period a day of release time to devote to their administrative duties. Department heads in smaller departments have no released time. And some schools have a great many more teachers than others. The district's differentiated staffing function recognizes that senior teacher expertise resides in each school; but to some new teachers this expertise is not available.

Effects of Teacher Selection

The effects of teacher selection in Montgomery County are varied and significant. These effects relate primarily to teacher experiences during the selection process, the district's recent emphasis on screening candidates, the district's management information systems, and the placement of transferring senior as well as beginning teachers.

First, the formal selection process in MCPS does not provide the same experiences for all candidates. Some candidates are actively recruited by the school district. This communicates to candidates that the district is interested in and willing to take time with them. In addition, some candidates report that the Central Office personnel were cooperative and professional and provided immediate feedback on their applicant status. Others report very favorable treatment by teachers and principals during their site interviews.

On the other hand, other candidates report numerous frustrations with the hiring process—frustrations that relate to the requirements of the process and treatment by the personnel office. Some candidates view the paperwork requirements as too involved and a major annoyance. Others report that the testing requirements are unnecessary since they had already passed other tests and had met academic standards set by their colleges and universities.

However, most of the frustrations about the selection process stem from the manner in which candidates were treated by the personnel office. Most often, this frustration is a result of poor communication and disorganization on the part of Central Office staff. Some candidates were discouraged from applying by Central Office staff because they had too much teaching experience and too many academic credentials (i.e., advanced degrees) and therefore would be too expensive to hire. Other candidates reported that Central Office staff were difficult, unhelpful, and discourteous. Telephone calls were not returned for months and file folders were lost. In one instance, the Central Office lost a candidate's application file and told him to replace all the materials with originals, not copies. These experiences communicate to candidates that they have to be quite persistent in order to be hired in the district. As one teacher noted, "You have to make a pest out of yourself." Given these communication problems with the Central Office, some candidates turn to principals for assistance in the selection process.

Second, the district has implemented stringent screening mechanisms in addition to state certification requirements. Many administrators believe the certification process to be a barrier to selecting qualified teachers. While the state itself makes no claims regarding the relationship between certification and teacher quality, district administrators lament that "frequently (teachers) are qualified, but we can't hire them because they don't meet certification requirements."

Presently, the structured interview and testing programs account for 60 percent of a candidate's composite ranking and, therefore, may have a significant effect on the selection process. The procedure of weighting the various criteria seemingly would enhance a principal's choice in selection. However, the Central Office referrals are based on the candidate's composite rankings, which, in effect, constrain principals' choice. Principals must justify their choice if their choice is not number one on the rating scale. Although candidates are rarely deemed unacceptable on the basis of the structured interview, they most likely would not be referred to a local school if they scored poorly on the interview. On the other hand, the subject matter tests, which a number of principals and teachers consider to be examinations of highly specific (or, in some cases, arcane) knowledge, may have caused the district to lose otherwise qualified candidates. Before the weighting system was put into effect, principals and teachers lamented the loss of candidates they viewed as outstanding who did not make the cut-off score.

Third, the effects of an inadequate management information system exacerbates the problems of the shrinking applicant pool. Division of responsibility for staffing specialists by geographic area of the system serves duplicative functions and encourages an atmosphere of competition. Staffing specialists will compete occasionally with each other for candidates. The manual management of 3000 to 4000 applications per year results in "piles of files" sorted by candidates' major subject fields. This limits the district's ability to efficiently determine if an applicant would be qualified to teach in more than one subject.

However, administrative personnel in the district are very much aware of the limitations of the current system and have plans for computerizing teacher applications. The new system is intended to better inform candidates of their status, cross-reference applicants according to their qualifications, test scores, subject matter competencies, and special interests, and further standardize and quantify assessments made of candidates.

Finally, internal transfer policies affect selection—primarily by taking up an ever-increasing portion of Central Office and principals' resources and by forcing delays in the hiring decision. While selection decisions are being delayed in order to place transfers, recruits are accepting job offers from other local school districts (which hire early and centrally). Principals who delay resignations in order not to hire "undesirable" transferring teachers thwart the efforts of the Central Office and decrease its ability to anticipate vacancies.

In addition, by allowing senior teachers to transfer to the schools of their choice, some schools that are considered "difficult" (e.g., characterized as having less advantaged students, inadequate administrative leadership, and little community support) have difficulty in retaining experienced teachers. Because these "difficult" schools experience high turnover, the district is more likely to place beginning teachers in these "hard to fill" vacancies.

Montgomery County, unlike many other school districts, has expended a considerable amount of resources over the last two decades in assessing their recruitment and selection processes. Montgomery County is a "data conscious" district that attempts to plan and analyze its operations. The district has implemented selection tools that officials have anticipated to be responsive to changes in teacher supply and demand. MCPS has largely succeeded in maintaining high standards while accommodating flexibility in satisfying local school needs; it has succeeded in recruiting high-quality candidates—including an increased number of minority candidates—to MCPS schools; it has attended to logistical difficulties that have made hiring excessively complicated and has sought to implement improved management systems. Since our visit, the district has raised salaries and bolstered recruitment efforts in recognition of growing shortages and increased competition. MCPS is looking ahead and continuing to seek improvements in its selection processes.

Its greatest difficulties are posed by the demands of a large highly centralized bureaucratic system which must implement cumbersome procedures to satisfy formal requirements in the face of school needs and changing labor market conditions that demand flexibility, personalized treatment of candidates, and the ability to act quickly in the the pursuit of talent.

The need to maintain uniform district standards is countered by the need to provide for the varying particular needs of many different schools. Because these tensions are built in, they may not be as easily resolved as other problems. Indeed, it is possible that the tensions may never be completely resolved, but instead their emphasis may only shift from time to time.

EAST WILLISTON

Policy and Organizational Context

East Williston School District is located in a small, wealthy suburban community on New York's Long Island. A comprehensive system with three schools, East Williston serves approximately 1500 students with its 100 teachers. The district is a system whose high academic expectations are achieved. Fully 92 percent of its graduates are college-bound and 33 percent receive academic scholarships. These objective measures of academic success, coupled with the private academy image of the district's schools, create a prestigious reputation for East Williston. A primary contributor to the system's ability to recruit and retain quality teachers is the district's community support, along with relatively high teacher salaries (though not the highest in the area), and excellent working conditions (few student discipline problems, small classes, no cafeteria or bus duty, and reduced teaching loads for English teachers).

Turnover is not a problem. Of the 43 teachers who left between 1980 and 1984, 53 percent retired, 28 percent were dismissed, and 19 percent pursued other opportunities. Importantly, the district encourages early retirements and screens out candidates after hiring. Although the district places a great deal of value on teaching experience, an early retirement incentive plan was created several years ago to replace a faculty that was perceived as too senior. Teacher evaluation in East Williston, while primarily used as a mechanism for socializing staff members, leads to a tenure decision in the third year. The superintendent leads this process and actively engages the community in the consideration of a teacher's performance. In the last five years, 13 percent of those teachers eligible for tenure were denied and dismissed.

Organizational Characteristics

East Williston is characterized by the active leadership of its superintendent, the multiplicity of roles which both administrators and teachers play in a decentralized system, a tightly coupled organization, a strong adherence to the district's mission in its everyday activities, and a sense of professionalism among its teaching staff. These characteristics form a framework within which a particularly successful teacher selection process operates.

The small size of the district has resulted in a fairly basic organization. The superintendent has assistants only in administrative and business operations and is in charge of both personnel and curriculum. He gives personal leadership to the personnel process, regularly conveying to his staff his belief in the importance of high standards and expectations in hiring "master teachers." In fact, the superintendent considers recruitment to be his most important responsibility.

The district's small size also demands that other administrators and teachers play a multiplicity of roles. In addition to the various roles played by the superintendent, high school department chairpersons teach, evaluate other teachers, and design and implement staff development. In fact, because of the multiple roles that department chairs play, they are called curriculum associates. Furthermore, classroom teachers are involved in the hiring of administrators as well as teachers.

In turn, these organizational characteristics greatly enhance the articulation among teacher selection, curriculum and staff development, and teacher evaluation processes. The results are senior teacher involvement in the selection process, which invests them in new members, curriculum associates tailoring staff development to the specific needs of teachers, and selection and evaluation processes that teachers view as learning opportunities. Consequently, many values and beliefs which undergird organizational processes are well understood by administrators and teachers alike.

The tight coupling among organizational processes is enhanced also by administrators' and teachers' adherence to the district's mission. This mission reflects the district's commitment to the full intellectual, emotional, and physical development of students. This commitment is evident in the teacher selection process. The job descriptions for each vacancy are developed from the district's mission statement and the outcomes expected of district students. Interview questions for prospective teachers mirror the values inherent in the district's philosophy. More important, individual teachers, as they evaluate candidates, are challenged to think about the district's philosophy, their own, and those of their colleagues.

Finally, there is a strong sense of professionalism among East Williston's teaching staff. Professionalism is promoted by the district expectation that teachers will exercise their own judgment in the classroom as well as in the development of school-wide and district-wide programs. Teacher involvement in personnel selection and curriculum revision allows them to shape the district and the environment in which they work. In this consensual process, their own views are, of course, shaped. They are compelled to assess and reassess their individual and collective teaching strengths and weaknesses.

However, the recently enhanced role of the curriculum associates may impede the further professionalization of East Williston's teachers. In their recent efforts to ensure greater commonality among classes and across grade levels, the curriculum associates have tightened the curriculum, prescribing content for teachers to teach.

Selection Processes

While the superintendent is actively engaged in the selection process, responsibility falls to the principal and the school itself once the search is authorized. The process involves seven major steps.

The principal appoints a search committee composed primarily of teachers. It is the team's responsibility to define and develop the job description for each position to be filled. This description is derived from the district's mission statement and emphasizes the need for teachers with strong academic preparation in one or more fields, the ability to handle extracurricular assignments, and the willingness to satisfy demanding parents and students.

To attract candidates, an advertisement is placed in the *New York Times*, and administrators and teachers utilize informal connections. While East Williston's salaries are competitive, they are not the highest in the area. However, in hiring experienced teachers (a stated goal), East Williston is free—unlike most districts—to place them at the step on the salary schedule dictated by their years of experience. Despite the fact that the district appears to be recruiting "nationwide," most recent hires are from Long Island. The district's use of the *Times*, a prestigious newspaper, may be more important for what it symbolizes than for what it achieves.

The search committee screens approximately 150 to 300 letters of application for each vacancy. After assessing the applicants' paper qualifications, writing ability, and experience, the team requests between 15 and 20 formal applications from this pool. It is at this point in the process that the candidates' credentials must demonstrate the breadth and depth of knowledge that is expected of the position. The selection team carefully assesses letters, transcripts, resumes, and applications to determine a measure of the candidate's subject-matter knowledge. The district values teachers with experience, but this experience must be up to date; candidates are eliminated if they are returning to teaching after an extended absence from the classroom. Importantly, the school district's philosophy continues to guide the search team. Thus, the responsibilities and qualifications that the team defined in the job description take on concrete meaning for them as they assess candidates.

Three criteria are assessed in the formal interviews, which have been characterized as "grueling," "intensive," yet "comfortable." These are: the goodness-of-fit between the values of the candidate and those of the district, the capacity of the candidate to perform as an independent professional, and the extent to which the candidate complements the strengths already present in the faculty.

However, this last criterion presents problems for East Williston and its search for the best teachers. On the one hand, the search teams attempt to find those who are like themselves—people who share their values. On the other hand, they attempt to find those unlike themselves—people who will "add to what the district already has." One more complicating (but informal) criterion is present. In the search for "compatible" team members there is pressure not to select "too many powerhouses." Although no organization that requires cooperation can have too many individualists as members, this tension in selection criteria can lead to the selection of less than the best. However, most important, as decisions about candidates emerge, team members reconcile competing values and arrive at a consensus in order to select the best teachers.

The previous step reduces the pool of candidates from approximately fifteen to three or four. With the recognition that written references have limited value, principals (generally acting alone) will telephone references so as to elicit fuller details on the candidate's qualifications and how they relate to his or her teaching performance. At this point the field is narrowed to one or two candidates.

The next step calls for an observation of teaching, preferably in the candidate's current school. The visit is made by the team which assesses the finalist's ability to teach. Paradoxically, while the process is focused on assessing teaching performance, by the time performance is actually assessed, selection is nearly a *fait accompli*. Still, this step is a final check on the team's decisionmaking and adds further symbolic value to the selection of teachers in East Williston.

The final step is the principal's recommendation to the superintendent and the interview of the finalist by the district's top administrator. This step is more than ritual. In communicating their recommendations to the superintendent, principals must explicate the process and defend their selection. This final interview with the superintendent is deemed important by administrators and teachers and is an explicit demonstration of the superintendent's commitment to the process of teacher selection.

Teachers in East Williston note that the selection process is "intense" and is a major recruitment device in and of itself. Critical to the candidate's acceptance of a job offer are the feelings which the East Williston selection process engenders. As candidates they feel that they were scrutinized as professionals. The selection process also enables new hires to learn a great deal about the inner workings of the district.

Once teachers are hired, curriculum associates have the major responsibility for helping new hires adjust to the district. An important part of the curriculum associates' responsibilities is to continue to communicate the district's professional standards and expectations to new hires. Because the curriculum has been flexible in the past (not much is written down), the curriculum associates tailor specific responses to the specific needs of the individual teachers. Importantly, this staff development process for new hires is intertwined with their evaluation. Unlike the situation in other districts, the curriculum associates believe that they have enough time to adequately assist and respond to new teachers. New teachers agree.

Effects of Teacher Selection

East Williston uses its favorable geographic location, its reputation, and the informal networks of its staff to attract quality teachers. The district could easily staff its schools with no special effort, but nevertheless devotes considerable resources to recruitment and selection activities which symbolize the importance the district places on hiring: advertising in a prestigious newspaper, giving serious attention to job descriptions and interview questions, and relying on the district's top administrator to focus each search.

However, the effects of teacher selection are on a substantive level as well. The search process is essentially driven by the district's and the community's values, and thus promotes consensus among organizational participants on such important issues as curriculum and staff development and evaluation. The tight coupling of selection, curriculum and staff development, and evaluation processes enhances communication within the organization and clearly defines the district's expectations of teachers.

This tight coupling among these essential organizational processes is especially important to the induction of new hires. For example, curriculum associates, generally members of the teacher selection teams, have the major responsibility for helping new hires adjust to teaching in East Williston. An important part of the curriculum associates' responsibility is to continue to communicate the district's expectations to new teachers and tailor staff development to meet their specific needs. Curriculum associates, the established "master teachers" in East Williston, provide demonstration lessons for and close supervision of new hires. In turn, the teacher evaluation process is based upon the extent to which new hires (and other teachers as well) meet the expectations of the curriculum associates and the principal.

Not only do senior teachers welcome the additional responsibility entailed in their involvement in personnel selection, but also they welcome the measure of control it gives them in choosing their colleagues and superiors. In addition, the intensity of the selection process engenders commitment to the organization for prospective teachers. The experience of being interviewed and observed by the superintendent, principals, and teachers is novel. Teachers note that, as candidates, they felt that they were thoroughly evaluated, that they gained insight into the district, and most important, that they had been taken seriously and were valued as professionals.

In sum, the teacher selection process in East Williston enables the district to hire those with requisite expertise, knowledge, and teaching skills. The process also engenders commitment on the part of new hires to the district and of staff to new hires, teacher professionalism through staff involvement, and the creation of shared values.

HILLSBOROUGH

Policy and Organizational Context

Hillsborough County School District in Florida includes the City of Tampa and surrounding suburban and rural areas. The district serves approximately 112,000 students with its 6200 teachers. Students are primarily white non-Hispanics (74 percent) whose test scores compare favorably with national averages. Teachers are primarily white females (77 percent), experienced (average of 14 years), and members of the local, independent teachers' association (80 percent).

The metropolitan area includes a population of approximately 700,000 and is well known for its beaches, climate, and well-diversified and developed industry. These traits, plus the proximity of local universities (one with a large college of education), are attractive to prospective teachers. Many teachers move into the area because of Tampa's "sunshine." Some are in Tampa because their spouses are associated with local industry or the universities.

Several factors also hinder recruitment and retention. First, state mandates may limit the district's supply of teachers. Entrance requirements into teacher education programs have become more stringent. The eligibility standards for the Florida Teacher Competency Exam may limit the access of minority candidates (white applicants pass the test at a rate twice that of blacks). Increased state high school graduation requirements have heightened the demand for teachers, even those in high-supply subject areas. (For example, in 1982, Hillsborough had eight vacancies in social studies; with new course requirements in 1983, the district had 74 vacancies.) In addition, new teachers (or those from out of state with less than three years experience) must participate in the year-long Florida Beginning Teacher Program (BTP). The BTP provides a supervised induction for new teachers through a comprehensive program of support, training, and documentation of the mastery of teaching competencies. In schools with a large number of new teachers, the BTP has become an administrative burden for principals.

Coupled with these state mandates is the fact that colleges and universities in Florida supply only approximately one-third of the state's demand for certified teachers. This figure is expected to decrease to one-fifth in 1986. Finally, the beginning salary for teachers in Florida is low compared with other Southeastern states (or at least was at the time of the study). The district, which is typically described as pupil-rich and property poor, is more competitive at the upper end of its salary schedule. However, Florida's legislature, which is known for its proactivity in educational issues and specificity in mandating reform, is intent on making teacher salaries regionally competitive and compatible with the goals of enacting both merit-pay and career-ladder programs in the state.

Selection practices in Hillsborough are further constrained by a 1970 judicial ruling that mandated an 80:20 white-minority ratio of teachers hired for each of the district's schools. Although the school board lifts this requirement for late summer hiring, the Central Office attempts to force principals to comply with the policy goal of desegregated schooling.

The recent history of teacher selection in the Hillsborough County School District has been one of change—change initiated by the district's Central Office as well as change mandated by the state legislature. These changes are intertwined with growing uncertainties in what has been a favorable teacher labor market and increasing centralization and standardization in what has been (and still largely is) a decentralized school district.

Organizational Characteristics

Recent years have seen the central authority of Hillsborough's personnel office enhanced. Yet, the district has a history of decentralization in the hiring of its teachers. This organizational characteristic is reinforced by the belief that if principals are to be held accountable for their schools, then they must have the authority to hire. While a blend of centralizing and decentralizing characteristics affects the teacher selection process, the process remains essentially decentralized. Some uniformity in selection decisions is ensured by a consensus among Central Office administrators, principals, and teachers regarding criteria for teacher selection. However, tensions are created by the demands of centralization and decentralization. On the one hand, there is the demand for efficiently managing the personnel functions in a large and complex metropolitan school system such as Hillsborough's. On the other hand, there are demands associated with effectively choosing the teacher candidate who best fits into the local school.

In addition to responding to external demands, Hillsborough's personnel office is expected to efficiently manage a number of internal demands. With its staff of 28, the personnel office recruits at 85 schools of education in 10 states, handles a large applicant pool (approximately 800), contacts references and reviews credentials, utilizes a standard screening (interview) instrument that is compatible with the district's selection goals, fills many vacancies (600 in 1984), and manages a mobile work force that is characterized by an annual rate of three times the number of leaves (331) and transfers (690) as resignations (317) and retirements (128).[2]

The central screening function and the internal mobility of the district's teachers are organizational characteristics that considerably affect the centralized selection process. First, data collected (especially through the EMPATHY interview guide—to be described below) by the Central Office in its initial screening of prospective teachers reflects the school system's intent to hire those with particular personality and character traits. Second, the recruitment of new teachers is inhibited by local policy that restricts the hiring of recruits before the emptying of the internal transfer pool on the basis of seniority. Hillsborough's large internal transfer pool is created by many teachers who enter the system and then wait to be transferred to a school that is closer to their homes or to a school with a "better reputation."

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[2] These mobility and attrition figures are from the 1982–83 academic year. System officials note that these figures have remained relatively constant over the last several years.

On the other hand, the local school principal has a "sacred" role in hiring teachers. This role is enhanced by organizational procedures that inhibit the selection of out-of-town candidates and encourage the selection of those with previous contact with site administrators. For example, teachers are encouraged to personally call the principals of schools where vacancies exist, and principals tend to select those who are known by virtue of having taught as an intern or substitute in the district.

Highly centralized transfer policies can impose an undesirable teacher on a school. However, a principal can protect against this result by anticipating vacancies. For example, if a principal has a poor teacher and expects to lose a position in a year or two, he or she will select a very senior teacher from the internal transfer pool for a current vacancy. When the school loses a teaching position, the principal will be able to keep the more senior, and presumably more desirable, teacher.

As previously mentioned, some schools have better reputations and thus an advantage in attracting better teachers. These schools are characterized by having well-behaved students who are academically motivated, parents who care and have influence, and principals who are effective leaders. Senior teachers may voluntarily transfer to these schools and district policy dictates that they must be placed before the hiring of new teachers.

Therefore, with a lack of adequate coordination of vacancy information by the Central Office and the reality of powerful informal networks among principals and teachers, teacher selection in Hillsborough remains heavily decentralized.

Selection Processes

The teacher selection process involves three major steps. First, the candidate must formally apply by completing applications with both district and state (certification) offices, taking the Florida Teacher Competency Test, and placing his or her fingerprints on file. These requirements cost the applicant approximately $100 and are quite time-consuming. References are checked and the Central Office usually directly contacts the candidate's university supervisor and internship principal or supervisor. One of two different standardized forms is used to rate the candidate's traits. The two forms differ in emphasis. If a reference is telephoned, the form used by the district administrator requests that the individual assess the candidate's teaching experience, interpersonal relationships, and professional competence. If a reference is asked to return an evaluation checklist, the form requests that the individual assess primarily the candidate's personality and character traits.

Second, the candidate is interviewed by Central Office personnel officials and subject area supervisors. Criteria include appearance, suitability as a role model, motivation, and human interactive skills. While scholarship is said to be important, subject area knowledge generally is not assessed. The Central Office collects specific data on the candidate's personality through the use of a structured interview tool called EMPATHY (Emphasizing More Personalized Attitudes Toward Helping Youth). This interview, which focuses neither on pedagogical skills nor on subject matter knowledge, is considered an important screening device by both central and site administrators. However, EMPATHY is not used as a pass/fail mechanism and most candidates who are certified will be deemed eligible.

Third, principals become involved in the selection process when they ask for a referral. However, at this point in the process, the significance of the principal's role varies and informal decision rules tend to predominate. Generally, a Central Office supervisor will refer one to three candidates. In some cases, a supervisor will refer candidates to particular principals on the basis of informal criteria such as language, clothes, and appearance. In other cases, principals weight the judgment of the Central Office heavily. In still others, principals use the advice of department heads (who participate in some decisions) and their contacts with "friends," former teachers, and colleagues in other schools. Nonetheless, in most cases selection criteria for principals mirror those of the Central Office. The final decision is the principal's.

The formal selection process is generally a positive experience for new teachers since it communicates to them that the process is fair. In addition, the highly formal interview communicates to new hires that they had to pass a test in order to be considered further. However, despite new teachers' acceptance of the formal selection process, most took additional steps to find preferred positions within the district since they "could not rely on Central Office." Teachers note at least two reason for circumventing the Central Office. First, Central Office personnel are known to be "unhelpful" at times during the complex and lengthy selection process. Second, Central Office policy states that applicants should telephone a pre-recorded announcement of school vacancies in order to learn where jobs are available. This system suggests to applicants that they have a better chance of getting hired by personally telephoning the principals of the schools where the vacancies exist. This precipitates what teachers call a "rat race" for job openings. Ultimately, teachers recognize that the key to getting hired is "working the informal system."

As previously noted, Florida's Beginning Teacher Program requires all first-year teachers to participate in a supervised induction program. Each beginning teacher has a support team consisting of a building level administrator, a designated peer teacher, and one other professional educator (usually a Central Office administrator). The new teacher and his or her support team develop an individualized professional development plan. Observations are made using a standardized instrument. Feedback and assistance are provided. A record is kept of the new teacher's progress toward mastery of the required competencies.

As previously noted, the number of new teachers in a school affects the extent to which the program is successful. However, other problems exist. For example, peer teachers and other professional educators are not given adequate release time and may not be available for consultation. An inadequate budget for the program has resulted in poor coordination, poor communication, and too much paperwork for teachers. Thus, despite a general atmosphere of informal support, most new hires feel they were "basically thrown to the wolves" in their first year of teaching.

Effects of Teacher Selection

The effects of the teacher selection process in Hillsborough are varied and significant. These effects are related to systematic biases toward the selection of local teachers, systematic biases toward the selection of teachers who have certain personality traits, shared beliefs that the process has improved the quality of the labor pool, shortages created by state mandates, and the high concentration of new teachers in "less desirable" schools.

First, Central Office hiring procedures, informal selection criteria, state policy, and the district's present recruiting practices tend to result in Hillsborough hiring primarily local teachers. For example, the dissemination of vacancy information by the Central Office and the hiring biases of principals favor the local candidates. Candidates are more likely to be hired if they can telephone principals where vacancies exist, and principals are more likely to hire those whom they know personally (especially by virtue of having taught as an intern or a substitute in the district). Thus, persistent local teachers have the advantage in locating vacancies and getting to know principals who are more apt to hire "known quantities."

In addition, the state's beginning teacher program may result in the hiring of local teachers. For example, the beginning teacher program treats out-of-state teachers (with three years or less experience) as if they had no teaching experience. As a result, out-of-state, experienced teachers, who feel they should not be required to participate in a supervised induction, may be discouraged from applying to school districts in the state. Finally, while the district "recruits" in 10 states, it is evident that candidates who were hired recently seek out the district primarily in conjunction with personal reasons for moving to Tampa.

Second, Central Office screening procedures discriminate in favor of teachers who "empathize" with children. Reference forms rate and the EMPATHY interviews evaluate the personality traits of candidates. Neither pedagogical skills nor subject matter knowledge are considered significantly in the administration of these two selection screening mechanisms. Additionally, Central Office recommendations and local principals' selection criteria tend to emphasize interpersonal characteristics, while giving no further consideration to the academic-related characteristics of teacher candidates.

Third, there is a consensus that teachers who were presently being interviewed and hired are of better quality than their predecessors. In large measure, the use of EMPATHY has contributed to this perception. There is the widespread belief that the instrument enhances the professionalization of selection through standardization and "objectivity." Many perceive the selection process to be objective and effective because the highly formalized procedures communicate to candidates that the process is both fair and rigorous.

Fourth, teacher shortages created by state testing and certification programs affect the capacity of the district to recruit and select specific teachers. While administrators note problems associated with recruiting math and science teachers, actual shortages have occurred primarily in special education and the pool of minority candidates. The district will hire special education teachers who are "close" to certification standards. However, the shortage of minority teachers is more difficult to overcome. State mandates regarding university education requirements and teacher competency testing are more of an obstacle to minority candidates than to white candidates. (It is possible that since talented minority candidates are less likely to aspire to teach, it is the "less able" of the minority pool who are being tested.)

In addition, the beginning teacher program is an administrative burden for those principals who have large numbers of new teachers. The "staggering" amount of paperwork associated with the program creates a burden that most administrators would like to avoid. Those principals in a position to hire experienced teachers will do so, thus inflicting a greater burden on other principals who are not so able. Also, inadequate funding, coordination, and communication may prevent the program from meeting its potential.

Internal uncertainties created by the district's policies also have an effect on the district's capacity to recruit and select teachers. The internal transfer pool creates a waiting period for new hiring and is an obstruction to recruiting and selecting teachers. In some cases, principals will be pressured to hire from within early in the transfer period in the spring in order not to have an "undesirable" teacher forced on them. Although plans are under way to input personnel data on a computer, the district's antiquated file folder system and informal referral process have prevented systematic coordination of candidates and positions.

Finally, local policies that allow senior teachers to be transferred to preferred schools (schools near their homes or that have more academically able and motivated students) can create an unequal distribution of teaching talent. These policies continually create vacancies in rural schools and schools that have students who are difficult to teach. Therefore, some schools (with potentially the most difficult educational problems) continually have to fill their vacancies with new, inexperienced teachers. This problem is compounded by the fact that administrators in these schools will be overwhelmed by the supervisory requirements of the BTP.

Nonetheless, at this time, this and other impediments to the teacher selection process have yet to prevent Central Office administrators and principals from finding teachers with qualities that Hillsborough County School District desires.

ROCHESTER

Policy and Organizational Context

Rochester City (New York) School District serves approximately 33,000 students with its 2300 teachers. The student population is diverse: 51 percent black, 35 percent white, 11 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent other. A decade ago, student demographics were quite different. In 1974, there were 42,000 students of whom 51 percent were white. The past decade has also been a period of declining student academic achievement—especially with regard to the widening of the gap between the test scores of whites and minorities. These and several other factors have contributed to the characterization of Rochester as having a "complex urban environment."

First, the district's school board is fiscally dependent and its members are elected on a partisan basis. In addition, board members are responsible for a specific subset of Rochester's schools and are active on their personnel committees. These factors reveal a politically active school board.

Second, there has been a guarded relationship between the teachers' union and the school system—especially since the teacher strike in 1980. The union has supported the typical management/labor division of responsibility in the recruitment and selection of teachers. In abdicating any significant role in this process, the union can maintain that it is not responsible for poor personnel decisions. On the other hand, the union is exerting its influence by organizing the system's substitute teachers; this labor pool has become a major source of full-time faculty. In addition, the union has been concerned with systematizing the teacher (including substitute teacher) assignment process on the basis of seniority.

Third, it is recognized that the New York State Board of Regents and Department of Education are among the most powerful in the country and are given to mandating new policies, often with short deadlines. For example, a recent policy that increased high school graduation requirements in foreign language has created teacher shortages in this subject area.

Fourth, Rochester is characterized by a "graying staff." This variable, coupled with internal policies which encourage early retirement for administrators and their replacement from within the present ranks, further depletes the teacher pool.

Finally, the district is characterized by a high degree of bureaucratization and centralization. This characteristic appears to be one of Rochester's chief assets: Roles are clearly defined and an extensive planning process addresses a wide array of issues—including manpower projections. However, as will be described, this characteristic as well as others work to constrain principals' choices in the teacher selection process.

Organizational Characteristics

Several organizational characteristics affect the teacher selection process in Rochester. First, in a district with 2300 teachers that needs to hire and place approximately 250 teachers per year, Rochester's personnel needs are considerable. The staffing function is the responsibility of the Personnel Division, which hires in specific subject or certification areas. In addition, this division is supported by Curriculum Development, which contains subject area directors who interview candidates in their specialties. Also, there are supervising directors (to whom principals report) who coordinate and consolidate staff requirements for schools within their jurisdictions.

The Central Office constructs estimates of vacancies through manpower planning, coordinates a wide-ranging recruiting effort (described below), conducts an extensive screening process for selection, and controls staff development.

Second, approximately 10 percent of Rochester's teachers transfer within the district every year. These internal transfers are both involuntary and voluntary. When teachers have been excessed because of enrollment declines in their schools, they are given the opportunity to transfer to any school with needs in their area of certification. This is done by seniority according to contractual arrangement with the teachers' union. After these slots are filled, voluntary transfers are allotted by seniority. Importantly, principals have no choice about accepting these two categories of transferring teachers.

Third, principals have the opportunity to offset internal transfers and the centralized authority in recruiting and screening candidates by manipulating substitute teachers into vacancies. When vacancies arise, principals request those substitutes who are "known quantities" to fill positions. Simultaneously, principals encourage these particular substitutes to apply formally for the vacant positions. The hiring of substitutes enables administrators not only to assess the abilities and commitment of teachers, but to influence the selection process as well.

The substitute pool, created largely through principals' informal networks during the height of the teacher-glut years, has provided a major source of permanent staff over the last decade. In many cases substitute teachers begin serving the district on an on-call or per diem basis. If a teacher performed well in this role, then he or she would be "promoted" by being given an extended assignment. With numerous teachers beginning their tenure as per diem and then as contract substitutes, Rochester has, in effect, created an informal career ladder for teachers.

However, with a general shortage of teachers and union control over the selection of substitutes, the usefulness of this informal recruitment and selection mechanism may be reduced. A general shortage will likely deplete the substitute labor pool. The effect of union control over the hiring of substitutes is unclear. However, union control is likely to lead to a reliance on seniority, thus reducing the effectiveness of the principal's observation of substitute teaching as a mechanism to assess performance prior to hiring.

Fourth, board members and administrators assert that the capacity to teach in a multicultural, ethnically diverse environment is the single most important characteristic to be possessed by a teacher. That is, Rochester seeks those teachers "who can relate to a wide range of ethnic and socioeconomic groups" of students. In turn, there is considerable consensus that "good teachers" are those who enjoy working with children of diverse backgrounds and strive to ensure that all students achieve.

Selection Processes

Teacher selection in Rochester is characterized essentially by an extensive recruiting effort to build an applicant pool, and a three-tiered structured interview process. These recruitment and selection processes are highly centralized—much like most administrative functions in the school district. While most teachers and administrators describe the recruitment and selection process as "bureaucratic," it is recognized that the past successes in finding "good teachers" are traceable to this organizational characteristic.

First, the Central Office coordinates about 24 university campus visits per year and distributes brochures in over 245 colleges and agencies. In addition, Central Office administrators attend various teacher education consortia and follow the recruiting trails of major industry located in Rochester. These efforts are intended to maximize contacts with candidates who will meet the district's needs. In some cases, if a Central Office administrator contacts a high-demand candidate—especially one who is a member of a minority group—a contract will be offered on the spot. Yet, the most fruitful recruiting effort of the Central Office is its practice of interviewing applicants throughout the year, regardless of openings. Most of the district's recent hires have been locals. However, most administrators argue that it is necessary to maintain a "presence" outside the immediate area; the importance of such a presence will grow.

Second, selecting new teachers depends heavily on the outcome of a three-tiered interview process. The initial interview is conducted by a personnel director (either on the recruiting trail or in the Central Office) and considerable effort is devoted to assessing the candidates' "potential for urban teaching" as well as the requisite certification, experience, and training. This assessment is based primarily on the candidates' responses to interview questions that probe sensitivity toward diverse student groups.

A standard job description for teachers is utilized by the Central Office and an accompanying checklist is used to rate prospective teachers. The job description focuses on a teacher's capacity to manage a classroom, meet the individual needs of students, and cooperate with administrators, teachers, and parents. The checklist focuses on personal characteristics (e.g., appearance, oral communication skills, poise, flexibility, and enthusiasm for teaching), teaching experience (e.g., student teaching evaluations and references), potential for urban teaching (e.g., attitude, experience, and training), and subject matter competency.

Additionally, a writing sample, on a predetermined pedagogical topic, is collected and is used to make substantive judgments about the candidate's teaching skill as well as writing ability. Candidates are asked to respond to questions focused on the type of school environment most beneficial to students, recent trends in their field, their teaching style, methods to individualize instruction for a diverse student population, their expectations of students whom they teach, the essentials of a well-developed lesson, whether or not reading should be taught in all content areas, and identifying and solving "urgent problems" facing urban schools. Despite the apparent hurdles in this first step, very few teachers are screened out. The effect, though, is to create the appearance of selectivity.

The next step is for the candidate to be interviewed by an appropriate Central Office subject area director. This interview tends to be wide-ranging; the administrator considers the candidate's college coursework and grades, and methodological and disciplinary approaches. However, as in the previous interview, the most attention is devoted to assessing the candidate's capacity to teach in a multiethnic setting. Additionally, the administrator is careful to consider the compatibility of the candidate with the particular school where the vacancy exists. At this point, the Central Office refers candidates to the particular school, usually with a recommendation for hiring. The number of Central Office referrals is contingent upon the supply of candidates for a given subject area or grade level.

The next step is for candidates to be interviewed by the principal of the school to which they are referred. In a few secondary schools, department chairpersons are involved. Principals vary widely in the emphasis they place on particular selection criteria. However, one common selection criterion does exist: the goodness-of-fit between the character of the candidate and the school's clientele.

Site administrators tend to assume that the candidates they interview are academically competent, primarily because they have been certified. Principals have the authority to make the final choice among candidates.

When final recommendations are complete, the Central Office presents the Personnel Committee of the school board with an abbreviated credential file. The committee examines the file and scrutinizes the candidate's record for evidence of academic qualifications. One board member noted that "we don't want to consider someone (who) doesn't have a B or B+ average." However, the major concern of board members is the capacity of prospective teachers to be "open" to students, parents, and their "constituencies." This concern is communicated directly to the administrators responsible for hiring teachers.

The selection process in Rochester is highly centralized and formalized and has been a useful tool for solving district-wide educational problems. The process itself has enabled the school board and district administrators to recruit and select those candidates they desire.

Once hired, new teachers are involved in the district's regular staff development and evaluation programs. These programs are extensive. However, resources for the staff development program are not specifically directed to the needs of new teachers. (For example, while the district's staff development program is extensive, most of its efforts are devoted to identifying and developing administrative leadership among senior teachers).

In addition, probationary teachers are to be observed and evaluated at least three times per year. The observations are formal and are cast as interpretive narrative—that is, the observer records and interprets whatever events he or she deems significant. A conference is held with the teacher following each evaluation. At this conference, strengths and weaknesses are discussed and recommendations for improvement are made. Responsibility for teacher evaluation rests solely with the building principal. Given that responsibility for recruitment and selection rests primarily with the Central Office, a new teacher may be hired on the basis of one set of qualities and then evaluated on the basis of a different set. Presently, there is a loose coupling among recruitment and selection and evaluation processes.

Effects of Teacher Selection

The Rochester City School District has numerous policy and organizational constraints on its efforts to select teachers. Yet, the district's high degree of centralized and bureaucratic control allows administrators to efficiently conduct the process. Centralization appears to enable administrators to handle the relatively large number of vacancies each year, respond to the demands of the teachers' union as well as state education agency mandates, and heighten consensus regarding selection criteria and, consequently, the educational goals of the system. In addition, Rochester's centralized organization empowers the board of education to better meet the needs of its constituencies.

On the other hand, centralization can impede the district's ability to select teachers who will best fit the needs of particular schools. In Rochester, this manifests itself in a number of ways—primarily with regard to the constraints on the principal's involvement.

First, the Central Office utilizes general job descriptions and a standard checklist in the initial interview. These standards are not specific to the vacant position and limit the ability of the Central Office recruiter to accurately assess the qualifications of a candidate for a particular assignment. This problem will be exacerbated by the district's need to recruit more widely in the future.

Second, the first two stages in the interview process are conducted by Central Office administrators (and many of these interviews are conducted on distant campuses) and contracts are offered occasionally before candidates meet their building principals. Thus, in effect, these teachers can be "imposed" on principals and their competencies may not fit the needs of the particular school.

Third, the internal transfer process limits the principal's involvement in teacher selection in at least two ways. On the one hand, teachers who have been excessed because of student enrollment declines, and senior teachers who desire a new position, may transfer to any school with needs in their area of certification. Principals must accept the placement of these teachers in their schools even if they do not meet the needs of the particular teaching assignment. On the other hand, while the district can estimate (through its manpower planning process) the number and types of the teachers needed, it takes considerable time to empty the internal transfer pool. Thus, it is usually some time in the summer before administrators know actual positions and school locations.

Still, principals are asked to make the final choice regarding the hiring of new teachers and generally feel that their input is valued and considered. Most important, though, their choice is quite limited because of the small pool from which they select. But the tension that can develop between centralized and decentralized forces in teacher selection has been reduced by the tendency for principals to manipulate the substitute pool and hire those whom they have had an opportunity to observe or about whom they can gather impressions from trusted colleagues. However, with the diminution of the district's own "reserve army of the unemployed" (i.e., the substitute teacher pool), tension in hiring authority between the Central Office and principals may increase.

DURHAM

Policy and Organizational Context

Durham County Schools, located in the Research Triangle Park area of North Carolina, serves approximately 17,000 students with its 1050 teachers. Students are primarily white (70 percent). The 22 schools in the district are relatively desegregated, with minority enrollment ranging from 15 to 52 percent. The schools serve the suburban and rural areas of the county while an inner-city district (with 90 percent minority students) serves the county's urban area.

Because the Research Triangle Park area attracts high-technology research industries and is near the state's three major research universities, bright and well-educated people are attracted to the area. Some of them want to teach in the district because they view teaching as a career and the Triangle area as a desirable place to live. Others view teaching as desirable employment that provides supplemental income while spouses work with local industry or pursue graduate studies. In fact, district administrators note that up to 40 percent of new hires are brought to the system by the area's prestigious institutions.

This pool of bright people provides the district with an ample supply of qualified applicants. The district hires approximately 150 teachers per year from an applicant pool of 2000. Even in high-demand fields such as math and science, the district generally has three or four applicants per vacancy. In fields such as English or social studies, applicants number 15 to 20 per vacancy. Furthermore, the school system is beginning to attract qualified teachers through the state's lateral entry program. The district's annual turnover rate of 10 to 12 percent reflects the highly mobile nature of the area's work force. Most of this turnover is attributed to spousal moves.

Organizational Characteristics

Teacher selection in the Durham County Schools is developing within the context of a comprehensive restructuring of its total personnel management system. This system, initiated in the early 1980s, encompasses not only recruitment and selection of teachers, but their induction, evaluation, and career-long training as well.[3] The personnel management system was initiated by an assistant principal working with a committee of principals. Briefly, the goals of the new system were to determine local standards of technical competence for teaching, develop more formal and explicit recruitment criteria, enhance selectivity in hiring, develop norms for performance and enhance the opportunities for teacher socialization by identifying senior teachers as norm-setters, and develop a comprehensive staff development program that couples the above with the observation, evaluation, and tenuring of teachers.

This case study of teacher selection practices delineates the effects of efforts to centralize the personnel practices in a long-standing decentralized system, and involve senior teachers in personnel decision-making.

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[3] The leaders of this change effort, a superintendent and his assistant, recently have left the system and there is a question of whether the initiative will be continued under the new administration. Funding for this new system has been reduced, but many of the beliefs undergirding the initiative have become "established" within the school system.

The Durham County system has had a tradition of decentralized schools and local autonomy for principals. Local control by site administrators had been a strong belief of the previous superintendent (who had been in office for ten years and initiated the new personnel management system). However, a number of factors over the last decade—desegregation, rapid population growth, and the influx of well-educated, cosmopolitan constituencies—have created pressure on the system to centralize. These variables, coupled with the implementation of the new personnel management system, have been a source of tension between the Central Office's demand for centralization, standardization, and accountability and the local schools' demand for autonomy. However, the Central Office's reluctance to force the full implementation of recruitment and selection procedures of the new personnel system can be seen as providing a "mechanism" for working out this tension.

The comprehensive personnel management system, as developed and implemented by the district's administrators, intended to involve senior teachers in the recruitment, selection, and socialization of new teachers. However, the quest for centralization and standardization appeared to limit the involvement of senior teachers in the planning and implementation process. The plan explicitly stated that administrators would continue to play the "critical" role in "setting the content of discussion about recruitment and selection criteria." The quest for standardization was also offset also by the previous superintendent's belief that effective principals should not be "taken out of their strengths" by the new program. Nonetheless, "pilot schools" were selected to develop local plans that would conform to the system's goals and the committee's beliefs. Local resources were provided for the training of a "core staff" of teachers to assist in developing implementation plans for their respective schools.

Case studies of three schools involved in the initial implementation of the district's comprehensive management system reveal how principals' control over recruitment and selection prevailed while district administrators established centralized control over staff development.

Selection Processes

In the past, the "way for teachers to get hired" in Durham County was for candidates to first contact the principals. Although the Central Office has had a "gate-keeping" function by screening its large applicant pool, in many cases this screening was done after an informal negotiation between the principal and a candidate. However, now more applicants are first screened by Central Office administrators who examine "paper credentials, certification, and references." In addition, all candidates are required to take a basic skills test (in mathematics and vocabulary) administered by the Central Office. Although there is no cut-off score, a candidate is expected to correctly answer 50 to 60 percent of the items. Most candidates do.

At this point, if candidates are deemed "preferred" by the Central Office, they will be asked to attend an interview "seminar." This "seminar" consists of usually 8 to 10 candidates being interviewed in a group setting by three administrators (an appropriate curriculum supervisor, a principal, and the personnel director). With this "timesaving" interview procedure, Central Office administrators can more efficiently screen candidates from their large applicant pool and refer them to the local schools. However, this selection procedure may impersonalize what has been a personal selection process.

In each of the three case sites, there are four steps in the formal selection process: First, the principals notify Central Office of a vacancy. However, in elementary schools, principals are more apt to use internal shifts (within their schools) prior to notifying Central Office of a vacancy. Second, the Central Office provides all completed applications for review by the principal. Third, the principals screen applications, narrow the pool down to those who "stand out" (approximately five), and schedule interviews for candidates with themselves and the core staffs. Fourth, the committees and the principals interview the candidates and reach consensus, and the principals effect the hiring.

Each of the three schools in the case sites continues to utilize local selection criteria. Although principals and teachers stress that technical competency, in the language of the personnel management system, is a criterion, other characteristics are required for teachers to be selected: enthusiasm, cooperativeness, ability to handle student diversity, willingness to be involved in school activities, and familiarity with the district's reading program. These selection criteria are consistent with those deemed important by present Central Office administrators. During the Central Office interview, the interpersonal skills of the candidates are closely assessed. There is consensus that demonstration teaching would significantly improve selection. However, both teachers and administrators believe that the time required for involving the selection teams and candidates in this process would be prohibitive.

One goal of the new system is for the district and its schools to take a proactive approach to recruiting the best available candidates. However, the reactive approach that characterized the recruitment process prior to the new system continues. In fact, only a small portion of the resources allotted to the personnel initiative was spent on recruitment and selection (typically about $1500 out of $30,000). This is not surprising in view of the fact that of the new teachers selected in the case sites, approximately 60 percent had prior contact with the schools as interns, substitutes, aides, volunteers, or former students. Although the emphasis of the new superintendent will diminish this practice—especially among newer principals—most believe that principals will continue to select qualified candidates who initially approach them.

Finally, consistent with goals of the new system, senior teachers are involved in the interviewing and recommending of prospective teachers. However, their capacity to induct new members is inhibited by limited training for the task (one and one-half days at the Central Office and one day at the school) and the time for only informal peer relationships. New teachers report that their induction to their respective schools emphasizes policies and procedures more than educational goals, informal expectations, or teaching practices. Senior teachers do not always have adequate time to spend with new hires. Therefore, new teachers experience an induction process that may be more form than substance.

Yet, involving senior teachers in personnel management in the district seems to have engendered a commitment to new hires among teachers and administrators—a commitment that may ultimately enhance the district's capacity to recruit, select, and retain teachers.

Effects of Teacher Selection

As previously noted, the recent implementation of the personnel management system in Durham County has so far had limited influence on local hiring practices. In fact, many of the goals of the system, at least as they were established by the previous administration, have yet to be fulfilled:

1. Recruitment is reactive and schools use few resources as they continue to rely on informal networks and the large reservoir of highly educated people who move into the area.
2. Technical competence is not the primary criterion for selection, and organizational commitment to utilizing actual performance data is absent.
3. Senior teachers, while receiving some differentiated status, have yet to be recognized as technical norm-setters for new teachers.

To accomplish these goals, the previous administration would have needed the full commitment of principals and teachers. However, the former assistant superintendent did not fully involve many of the crucial participants in the planning. As a result, many teachers and administrators did not embrace the goals of the new personnel management system. Later, in order to "sell" the new system to principals and teachers, the extent of centralization was soft-pedaled. Given Durham County's limited need to recruit candidates, the former administration left this personnel function to the local preferences of principals and their established "old networks."

Although the present administration has reduced the already limited resources allotted for the new system, the personnel management system "continues to hold its own." While the district has had difficulty translating some of its goals into practice, the implementation of the new system has incurred significant benefits:

1. The shared decisionmaking among principals and teachers has increased principals' confidence in the decisionmaking capabilities of their teaching staffs.
2. Senior teachers' involvement in selection has increased their "investment" in new teachers.
3. The comprehensive personnel management system has encouraged local schools to address issues vital to them and to the district: goals, expectations, administrator-staff relationships.

Although innovative recruiting and selecting practices in Durham have so far succumbed to the status quo, the case study reveals how recruitment and selection fit into an organizational change effort to restructure the way teachers and administrators think about and deal with personnel issues.

III. ASSESSING TEACHER SELECTION PRACTICES

CENTRALIZATION VERSUS DECENTRALIZATION

Who Should Be Accountable to Whom and for What?

The case studies of teacher selection reveal the organizational tension between (1) the central authority's need for efficiently managing school systems and effectively maintaining uniform district standards, and (2) the local principals' need for effectively selecting candidates who best fit their particular schools. Central Office administrators are faced with such external forces as population shifts, student enrollment changes, and large applicant pools, and such internal forces as pools of experienced teachers who need or request to be reassigned. Principals are faced with local school cultures, students with diverse abilities and behaviors, and their own leadership styles and capabilities. The forces faced by the Central Office and the needs of individual schools must be mediated.

The tension emerges from the different organizational pressures which Central Office administrators and principals face and for which they are held accountable. Both Central Office administrators (primarily the school system's director of personnel) and principals are held accountable to the school board, the local superintendent, local constituencies and parents, other principals, teachers, and the state—although for different processes and outcomes.

Pressures toward Centralization

Personnel administrators are held accountable for maintaining standards for hiring teachers, for managing the recruitment and selection process, for treating individual schools fairly, and for treating all applicants equitably.

Personnel administrators must ensure that their selection processes are effective, efficient, and equitable. To ensure effectiveness, they must seek to reliably and validly assess the academic qualifications, interpersonal skills, and teaching performance of candidates. To ensure efficiency, they must seek to obtain information about candidates' qualifications, skills, and performance at a reasonable cost. To ensure equitability, they must seek to assess fairly all candidates applying for vacancies.

To meet those responsibilities, school district administrators use formal procedures that screen applicants prior to their consideration by principals. These procedures include the "gate-keeping" examination of a candidate's paper credentials, certification, and references; the design and implementation of formal and objective interview and testing instruments; the referring of a set of candidates to principals for their consideration; the placement of internal transfers (both voluntary and involuntary) on the basis of seniority within the school district; and the offering of "pre-contract binders" to exceptional candidates during recruiting visits to college campuses.

These procedures enable the Central Office to meet the demands for managing a school system and maintaining uniform standards in several ways. First, the gate-keeping function enables districts to efficiently process large applicant pools and to centralize recruiting efforts. Second, the design and implementation of formal interviewing and testing enables the district to ensure that candidates are judged according to a standard set of measures. Some districts use instruments that have been validated by research (see Sec. IV). The rating of candidates by apparently objective instruments legitimizes the centralized screening of candidates and the elimination of potential teachers from the applicant pool. Third, the placement of transferring teachers on the basis of seniority rewards longevity and creates an objective criterion for deciding where teachers will teach within the district. Fourth, the offering of contracts to candidates early in the "recruiting season" enables the central office to select among the best available candidates.

These organizational procedures have several effects. Centralized gate-keeping and formal and objective assessments of applicants provide the appearance of selectivity. This conveys the idea of quality control to all constituencies. The screening of applicants reduces the workload of principals, but also reduces their sphere of decisionmaking. The offering of "pre-contract binders" to exceptional candidates by the Central Office can be helpful but can conflict with a principal's desire to choose her or his own staff. Although principals generally support the Central Office in these efforts, they do not like to be told that they must hire particular teachers.

An unfortunate and unintended effect is created by the effort to treat transferring teachers fairly: the inequitable distribution of teaching talent within the school district. Senior (and, therefore, more experienced) teachers are given the choice where they would like to teach. In most school districts, there is a clear hierarchy in teachers' preferences for working at some schools and with certain principals. (This hierarchy is often so well known that even new hires to the district will request their placement based on this "folklore.") This sets up the condition that schools that are isolated, have students who are difficult to teach and manage, and have principals with poor reputations as leaders continually lose more experienced teachers.

Pressure toward Decentralization

Principals primarily are held accountable for the effective and smooth management of their schools. In fact, principals (and other administrators) will argue that site administrators cannot be held accountable for the performance of their schools if they do not have control over the primary determinant of that performance—the composition of their teaching staffs.

For principals, one way to ensure that their schools are effective and without turmoil is to use informal procedures to select teachers who fit in with local school conditions. These procedures include influencing the personnel system to select "known quantities" such as substitute teachers, interns, volunteers, and former students, and relying on colleagues from other schools and their own teachers to recommend potential applicants who are moving to the community.

These procedures enable principals to meet the demands for selecting candidates who best fit their schools in several ways. First, principals may manipulate vacancies to enable "known" candidates to apply. Principals often prefer to select substitutes, interns, volunteers, and former students because they know that they can actually control a classroom and teach. The preference is understandable since few school systems have procedures which reliably and validly ascertain that candidates can teach.

Second, principals can meet the demand for selecting candidates who best fit their school by using informal networks. "Networks" result in "trusted" information about prospective teachers. Principals often believe that Central Offices collect data which may be of dubious reliability and validity.

The major effect of preferring "known quantities" is the selection of local candidates who are persistent. To be "known," a candidate must have been a volunteer, substitute, or intern in a school system. This requires that the candidate be either a member of the community or a college student in the area. As a substitute, a candidate must be willing to wait, teach irregular hours and classes, and persist until a desirable full-time position is available. The preference for known quantities has discriminated against candidates from outside the system or the area. Of course, the importance of this preference will decrease as demand for new teachers exceeds the supply of known quantities.

A principal's use of informal networks in collecting information about prospective teachers can lead to the unequal distribution of teaching talent and experience within the school district. For example, principals with better contacts and better reputations will attract better teachers. Thus, principals new to the district and those with poor reputations will have difficulty staffing their schools with the best teachers.

ASSESSING ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS, INTERPERSONAL SKILLS, AND TEACHING PERFORMANCE

On What Basis Are Teachers Selected?

In part, the efficacy of the teacher selection process hinges upon the extent to which the mechanisms used by school districts lead to reliable and valid assessments of a candidate's academic qualifications, interpersonal skills, and teaching performance.

Reliability refers to the consistency of assessments across hiring decisions. By this, we mean that reliable assessments of a candidate will be based upon information that is consistent across time, across raters, and across other candidates applying for the same position. For example, some school districts in our study use highly developed instruments to gauge each applicant's interpersonal skills. To increase reliability, these instruments use standard questions administered by trained interviewers. Candidates are asked the same questions and interviewers are trained to score responses according to predetermined categories.

Validity in teacher selection refers to accuracy and comprehensiveness in measuring each applicant's potential for effective teaching. By this, we mean that assessments of candidates will be based upon information that accurately reflects the qualifications, skills, and performance of effective teachers. For example, to ensure validity, one school district in our study defines job-related responsibilities, closely assesses academic records, checks references and previous work experiences, delves deeply into a candidate's personality and teaching practices during formal and informal interviews, and observes the candidate during a demonstration teaching lesson. To increase validity (and reliability), these procedures are carried out primarily by the school principals and teachers—those who have accurate, first-hand knowledge of the qualifications, skills, and performance required of effective teachers in their schools.

Ensuring the reliability and validity of teacher selection information is not an easy task for school district administrators. In part, this is because effective teaching behaviors vary among grade levels, subject areas, types of students, and instructional goals. Although minimal competence may be assessed using standardized, generalizable, and uniformly applied criteria, assessments of competence (i.e., finer distinctions among good, better, and outstanding teachers) require differentiated criteria. Thus, the assessment of relative teacher competence during the selection process cannot be based solely upon highly specified, uniform criteria. Minimally, the reliability and validity of mechanisms to assess degrees of competence require multiple, comprehensive, and balanced measures of a candidate's academic qualifications, interpersonal skills, and teaching performance. And these mechanisms require resources and logistical arrangements which are more demanding than most districts are prepared or able to arrange.

School districts assess candidates' academic qualifications, interpersonal skills, and teaching performance by reviewing certification and college transcripts, checking professional references, conducting formal, standardized interviews, testing basic and subject matter skills, conducting school-level interviews, consulting informal networks, and observing actual teaching performance.

School districts have varying opinions about the utility of those methods, and use them for different purposes. This variation results from different views of how consistent the mechanisms are in assessing candidates, and how accurate, comprehensive, and balanced the mechanisms are in assessing the candidate's potential for teaching effectively.

Academic Qualifications

School districts review state certification, college transcripts, and professional references and conduct basic skills and subject matter tests in order to assess the academic qualifications of candidates.

Certification. A teaching certificate from an accredited teacher education program assures school district administrators that a candidate has at least minimum qualifications, and thus serves a useful gatekeeping function. School district administrators sometimes inquire no further into academic qualifications. In other words, from this point on, the selection process "assumes" that the candidate is academically qualified and uses assessments of other qualifications as selection criteria.

Some have argued, however, that the accreditation of education programs has no necessary relationship to the proficiencies that they are supposed to develop (Levin, 1980); and, at least until recently, schools and colleges of education have had only weak quality control mechanisms. As Levin observed, teacher training programs enrolled persons with some of the lowest academic qualifications to be found among major areas of study, and these programs rarely eliminated candidates. Nonetheless, some Central Office administrators and principals consider state certification to be an adequate standard for assessing a candidate's academic qualifications.

Transcripts. Some school districts in our study use college transcripts to assess candidates' academic qualifications. East Williston, for one, carefully considers the reputation of a candidate's college and his or her grades, because administrators and teachers there (unlike those in many other districts) believe that academic qualifications are an important indicator of later teaching effectiveness. Likewise, Montgomery County systematically weights the candidates' grades earned in their subject areas as well as their overall grade point average (GPA). Central Office administrators have made the candidates' GPA a major component of the composite rating of characteristics measured in the selection process (but ignore differences among colleges).

East Williston and Montgomery County appear to be exceptions to the rule. It is commonplace for administrators to report that they have seen "too many straight 'A' students who didn't know anything" about teaching, the assumption frequently being that "the smarter you are, the worse you will do."[1] The argument used to support the assumption is that brighter teachers will have more difficulty and less patience in working with average and below-average students, and will be more likely to leave within a few years—thereby making it less cost-effective to select and induct them.

Some even believe that high academic ability is negatively correlated with teaching potential, and attaching greatest importance to interpersonal skills. One principal spoke for many of his colleagues when he said:

> I look for warmth and caring for children. Maybe, that is the number one criterion. . . . Enthusiasm, warmth, and caring. . . . The other things [teaching competencies], they can learn on the job.

References. Professional references can point to a candidate's academic qualifications, but most school districts in our sample use them instead to assess the candidate's interpersonal skills and past teaching performance.

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[1] David Berliner has noted that "It is a rare field where a practitioner would be willing to say that 'the smarter you are, the worse you will do.' Yet, in education, this belief has vocal supporters. Principals with such beliefs hold the most tenuous logic and have no research evidence with which to defend their beliefs."

Testing. School districts use nationally or locally developed tests to indicate whether or not candidates possess the minimum academic knowledge necessary to teach in their field. In part, the use of testing reflects a distrust of academic records and state certification. Many simply do not believe that grades and certificates accurately reveal what a candidate knows. Two of the school districts in our sample use these tests to further screen candidates for the same position by comparing their scores.

Durham uses a basic skills test to assess an applicant's minimum competence in mathematics and vocabulary. Montgomery County uses a series of tests, developed internally, to determine if applicants possess English language and math skills. The tests contain primarily multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank items (or in the case of the English test, text editing and grammatical problems). Cut-off scores for these tests are set to screen applicants from the pool of candidates. Central Office administrators believe strongly in these tests and have determined that the candidates' test scores should account for approximately one-third of a composite rating of competencies, skills, and traits measured in the selection process.

However, some principals and teachers are concerned that the tests measure knowledge that is irrelevant to the subjects as taught in the school system. Some otherwise qualified candidates have scored poorly on the tests and been eliminated—perhaps, as some principals and teachers believe, merely because they are not good test-takers.

Interpersonal Skills

School districts review professional references and conduct formal interviews in order to assess the interpersonal skills of candidates.

References. Professional references indicate the extent to which a candidate's previous professors, principals, or colleagues consider him or her to have the interpersonal skills necessary to be an effective teacher.

Most school districts collect these assessments formally and informally. In the school districts in our study, formal instruments are used by the Central Offices and informal networks are used by the principals. The case studies reveal that principals believe that informally acquired information is more reliable and valid than information acquired formally.

School districts generally require applicants to submit professional references to the Central Office. Typically, districts ask candidates to have three former supervisors, colleagues, or even personal friends assess their skills according to a standardized checklist. The reliability and validity of the information gained in this fashion may be limited by several factors. First, raters are presented with broad categories representing a range of interpersonal behaviors. For example, these categories may include appearance, cooperation and dependability, emotional stability, mature judgment, ability to motivate students, rapport with students, and motivation to "go the extra mile." Raters are asked to assess how well (from poor to excellent) the candidate exhibits these interpersonal skills, but are given no criteria upon which to base their assessments.

Second, principals' ratings of teachers who are applying for new positions are often suspect. Principals may have incentives to distort assessments based upon whether they are anxious to keep or lose a teacher. They also may be prompted to help candidates who do not deserve help.

Finally, references may be questionable because candidates can seek out people who will give them high ratings, whether warranted or not. This validity problem accounts for the general distrust that principals have in centrally administered, formal instruments, and their preference to rely on their own assessments and upon informal discussions with trusted confidants. Unfortunately, not all principals have effective informal networks.

Formal Interviews. Most of the school districts in our study conduct initial interviews with candidates at the Central Office, using a highly structured instrument. If a candidate passes the interview and there is a vacancy, he or she will be referred to a local school for an interview with the principal. Some principals will involve department chairs and other teachers in interviewing candidates so as to get an array of opinions.

In three of our districts, the interview instruments are highly developed and strongly affect teacher selection. They do so because, first they provide a source of valuable information for administrators and enable them to satisfy several demands placed upon large, urban school districts; and second, school district administrators have a great deal of faith in them.

These instruments measure such characteristics as motivation, creativity, flexibility, patience, individuality, perceptiveness, dependability, a sense of humor, and a love of children.

School district administrators value these instruments for at least three reasons. First, they enhance the reliability of the selection process by enabling administrators to compare various (and in some cases, numerous) candidates according to consistent criteria. Second, they can be fairly quickly administered and scored, thus increasing the efficiency of the selection process. This is important since administrators have had to sort through large applicant pools since the teacher surplus of the 1970s. Third, these instruments reflect the need of schools to hire teachers who can inspire diverse student populations affectively as well as cognitively. In fact, these instruments were developed in response to the critical social issues of the last two decades. In the 1960s, schools were criticized for their dehumanizing practices. By the early 1970s, most major school systems finally faced desegregation. Consequently, school district administrators were compelled to seek teachers who possessed more than academic qualifications—teachers who could relate well to a wide range of students.

Although these interview instruments enhance the reliability of the selection process by enabling administrators to compare candidates for the same position according to how well they performed on a standardized instrument, and although they pose hypothetical questions or situations for the candidate, which reduces the possibility of interviewer bias inherent in more unstructured interviews, their validity is limited for at least three reasons.

First, despite school district administrators' faith in these instruments, their relationship to teaching performance is largely unknown. In one school district, no effort has been made to gather psychometric data (i.e., reliability, predictive validity, and standard errors of measurements); thus, no scientific evidence supports the instrument's use. In districts where the instrument has been "scientifically" tested, the validation studies were conducted almost two decades ago and were based on small, nonrandom samples.

Second, the design and use of these instruments could eliminate candidates who are well qualified and may be effective teachers. This is because these instruments may systematically discriminate against candidates who are cognitively oriented. For example, let us say an interviewer asks two candidates the question, "Why should we hire you?" One candidate answers that she can make the most difficult concept easy to understand, and the other answers that he loves children. The scoring procedure requires the interviewer to rate the former response negatively and the latter one positively.

In one school district, a candidate's score on this formal interview accounts for approximately one-third of a composite rating of his or her competencies, skills, and traits. In other school districts, a low score on the formal interview will reduce a candidate's chances for further consideration.

Third, as previously noted, there is little research evidence that employment interviews add to the predictability of later job performance. Despite the lack of supportive evidence for its use, the employment interview is the most widely used of all personnel selection devices. The structured interview, used by the school districts in our study, purportedly assesses noncognitive (interpersonal) traits and reduces the possible interviewer bias of unstructured interviews. The assessment of a candidate's interpersonal skills is an important step in the selection of teachers. However, the instruments in use do not have a firm empirical base. Their use must rest on administrative judgment.

Generally, principals are free to determine criteria and questions, to assess the interpersonal skills of candidates during school-level interviews. Principals in different schools need to find teachers with differing mixes of interpersonal skills. Elementary school principals, for example, believe the requisite interpersonal skills for teachers in elementary schools differ from those in secondary schools. The requisite interpersonal skills for teachers in urban schools will be different from those in rural or suburban schools. Principals' needs will differ not only among school districts, but within them as well. In addition, the requisite interpersonal skills for teachers will change with circumstances. While issues of reliability do not loom large, principals will do their best to pick teachers who will fit their schools.

First, principals devise their own questions to be asked and determine how to assess a candidate's responses. These questions and assessments are often based on the particular requirements of the position available. Principals pose questions to determine if candidates are "nurturers," are comfortable with multiethnic and diverse student populations, are sensitive to the differing demands of parents, and have the ability to be a team player. For many principals, it is very important to determine if a candidate has rapport with students. This assessment is often made by asking hypothetical questions about how the candidate would relate to students in particular classroom and extracurricular situations.

Second, the chance of selecting the right candidate is further enhanced by inclusion of members of the teaching staff in the interview. In some schools, teachers ask questions, assess responses, and help to decide who is to be hired. As one principal noted, "teachers see things that I don't" in candidates. In addition, some principals will appoint groups of teachers to be teacher selection teams. These steps enable principals and teachers to "pick up clues" about how candidates will fit in with the faculty of the school.

Teaching Performance

School district administrators review professional references of candidates and observe actual lessons taught by candidates in order to assess their teaching performance. Professional references indicate the extent to which a candidate's previous supervisors consider his or her past teaching performance effective. Classroom observation indicates the extent to which a candidate reveals appropriate and adequate knowledge, interactive skills, and teaching strategies. In effect, professional references can provide appraisals of past performance and classroom observation appraisals of current performance. Because past and current performance are the best predictors of future performance, these mechanisms may provide the most reliable and valid assessment of how effectively candidates will teach.

However, because of organizational and time constraints, most school districts forgo classroom observation and rely solely on professional references to assess teaching performance. For the most part, they do so regretfully. As one principal noted, "It would be tremendous if we had a corps of people who could go around and visit applicants." However, most conclude that this policy would be too time-consuming and expensive.

As previously discussed, references suffer from reliability and validity problems. These problems extend to the assessment of teaching performance. To be sure, recent references provided by a candidate's university supervisor, student teaching supervisor, and the principal at the student teaching site enable administrators to compare the teaching performance of candidates. However, not all candidates are recent graduates of teacher education programs. Thus, for experienced teachers, student teaching assessments may be dated information. Additionally, the assessment of student teaching has been noted to be unreliable because of the reluctance of college of education faculty to impede a new teacher's career before he or she has had the opportunity to gain some experience. Nonetheless, for many school district administrators, professional references are the source of information used to assess a candidate's teaching potential.

As noted, most school districts do not commit the resources necessary to observe a candidate's teaching performance. Some principals try to overcome the problem by hiring only "known quantities"—candidates they have worked with previously, such as former substitutes, student teachers, or volunteers. Failing that, they will prefer candidates they can learn about from trusted colleagues—their networks.

Only one school district in our sample, East Williston, commits the necessary resources to observe teachers either in their current assignment or in a demonstration classroom in the district. Administrators and teachers in East Williston will travel to a candidate's present school to observe him or her teach. Administrators put great value on this procedure because they believe that classroom observations not only demonstrate current skills, but also indicate the teacher's ability to develop and maintain long-term teaching strategies. Where this is not possible, the candidate will be invited to teach a demonstration lesson in an East Williston classroom, although demonstration lessons are regarded as much less revealing. Thus, a demonstration lesson is pursued only when a visit to the candidate's school is not possible (for example, because the candidate's school has closed earlier for the summer than East Williston).

The financial costs of this organizational commitment to collect the most valid information are modest for a school district with a pool of local candidates. At most, the district must hire substitutes to cover the classes of those teachers involved in the selection process, and pay for the travel of administrators and teachers.

Paradoxically, while the teacher selection process in East Williston is focused on assessing teacher performance, by the time performance is actually assessed, the step is nearly a formality. Still, it has great symbolic value as the focal point and penultimate stage in the selection process and provides a final check of the candidate's suitability.

To be sure, the teacher selection process in East Williston is time-consuming. Principals and teachers must spend a considerable amount of time in all phases of search, screening, and selection. Organizational and time commitments increase as the number of teachers to be hired increases. But administrators and teachers, as well as board members and the community in East Williston, willingly commit the necessary resources for what they consider a vital purpose.

MAXIMIZING VERSUS SATISFICING

What Are the Cost and Benefits of Obtaining Teacher Selection Information and Hiring the Best Available Candidates?

An economics of information framework (Levin, 1980) provides a heuristic for examining how school districts consider the cost and utility of information in the teacher selection process.

The utility of that information depends partly on its reliability and validity, that is, on how consistently and accurately the process measures the academic qualifications, interpersonal skills, and teaching performance of candidates. It also depends on whether the benefits outweigh the costs. The results must be worth the time and effort used to obtain them if the selection process is to survive competing organizational demands and policy constraints or can be justified relative to local teacher labor market conditions.

For one school district in our study, East Williston, the commitment to obtaining the most reliable and valid teacher selection information and choosing the best candidate outweigh the organizational demands placed upon district administrators. Most school districts are not willing to go to the same lengths as East Williston. Instead, they generally "satisfice"—settle for satisfactory alternatives.

Satisficing in Using Information

The case studies reveal that organizational demands limit school districts' ability to generate reliable and valid information about teacher candidates. These limitations are related to large applicant pools, large internal transfer pools, and poor management information systems.

Managing Large Applicant Pools. The school districts in our sample are limited in their search process by the large number of applicants whom they must treat both efficiently and equitably. These school districts have personnel manpower constraints which limit their ability to reliably and validly narrow an applicant pool of several thousand to a candidate pool of several hundred.[2] In the interest of fairness to all candidates, they must treat all alike. They cannot generate or consider more information about some candidates than about others. Because they must treat all alike, school districts must use procedures which are efficient. Efficient procedures may be superficial. They collect the same type of information on all candidates, but that information may have limited reliability and validity. District administrators lament the fact that there is not enough staff in the Central Office to assess their large applicant pools carefully. Principals lament there is not enough time to assess candidates effectively. Reflecting on his time-consuming responsibilities related to class schedules, textbooks, bus schedules, and student discipline, one principal asserted, "I have enough things to worry about without having to worry about recruitment and selection."

Furthermore, in the early stages of the recruitment process (early winter), there are few incentives to obtain the best available teacher selection information. School district administrators do not have firm estimates of vacancies or the subject areas or grade levels in which these vacancies will occur. Therefore, they use an array of data—ranging in cost from low to medium to high—as the selection process progresses.

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[2] As the need for new hires increases, districts may invest in more expensive personnel operations. Paradoxically, as the sizes of the applicant pool, candidate pool, and number hired converge, the expanded personnel operation will be forced to be less selective.

Administrators tend to use primarily low-cost data in the initial stages of the recruitment and selection process. Low-cost data include information gleaned from certification records, transcripts, and application forms. Though inexpensive, using these data to screen candidates is efficient and fair. While there are limits to the validity of the data, their use at an early stage in the process and as a gross screening device may be the only effort justifiable in cost/utility terms.

As the selection process progresses, administrators will collect medium-cost data. Medium-cost data include letters of recommendation (and phone calls to verify them), professional reference checklists, and the results of formal interviews and tests. Gathering these data is more expensive. Formal interviews, tests, and checklists enable Central Office administrators to meet important organizational demands—that is, the need for the appearance of quality control and for standardized (and fair) treatment of candidates. This information adds some to the assessment of the candidates.

Finally, school districts can collect high-cost data. High-cost data include the observation of actual teaching performance—probably the most reliable and valid assessment available to school district administrators. However, the cost associated with the collection of this type of information generally means that it is not done. There may be too many candidates to observe. The schools in which they are presently teaching may be too far away. There are probably no travel expenses budgeted for visiting candidates' present schools or having them conduct a demonstration lesson in a district classroom. Additionally, when next year's budgets are finalized or vacancies are confirmed or the internal transfer pool is emptied, then school is out for the summer. Consequently, there is little opportunity for the observation of actual teaching performance. Moreover, the logistics of collecting these high-cost data would prevent gathering the data for a large number of candidates, creating presumptive unfairness in the teacher selection process.

Managing Large Internal Transfer Pools. Administrators are constrained in the selection process by district policies which dictate that all teachers in the internal transfer pool (both voluntary and involuntary) be placed in their new assignments before the hiring of new teachers. Given the high internal mobility of teachers in the large school systems in our study, the emptying of the transfer pool is a rather lengthy process. Therefore, information on a potential new hire collected in February and assessments made in March cannot be acted on until late in the summer—usually in August, when either the information may be dated or the candidate is unavailable.

Inadequate Management Information Systems. If information about candidates is to be useful, it must be accessible at the decision time. Personnel offices accumulate information about large numbers of candidates at a time and in a place where it is not used. School district administrators collect a considerable amount of information on candidates, some of which decays and much of which is not accessible.

For example, in large school systems, ineffective filing systems may prevent cross-referencing of applicants who are potentially qualified in more than one subject area or grade-level and who have particular extracurricular interests or skills. In one large school district in our sample, administrators literally have to sort through "piles of files" (i.e., file folders) at the Central Office in order to determine which candidates are appropriate for a given vacancy. File folders are stacked according to subject area—resulting in the district's inability to efficiently determine if an applicant would be qualified to teach in more than one subject area or be willing or able to assist with extracurricular activities. Thus, district administrators, unable to access all the available files, are often forced to choose the first candidate who is good enough (i.e., to satisfice). Often in such cases, the search is limited by the memory of the personnel officers, and recent candidates may have an advantage. In other cases, by the time an administrator does come across the most appropriate candidate, the candidate may have accepted a job elsewhere.

School district administrators believe that computerizing their management information systems will render data collected about candidates more accessible and therefore more effective in making selection decisions. For some of the larger school districts in our study, teacher selection information will be managed through a computer system. In fact, administrators in these districts look forward to the day when they can rely on the computer to sort and analyze demographic, certification, ratings on professional reference, grade point average, and interview and testing information on candidates.

It is safe to assume that school district administrators will use computerized teacher selection information systems efficiently to manage large applicant pools. Such systems have great promise. They can easily sort candidates by their teaching fields, extracurricular expertise, preferences, and availability. A possible pitfall, however, is that such systems could render teacher selection a mechanical and simplistic process by encouraging reliance on information that can be easily input and analyzed. If numerical test scores and interview scores become the criteria, for example, schools may find themselves hiring high scorers instead of possibly superior teachers.

Satisficing in Selecting Candidates

The case studies reveal that policy constraints and local labor market conditions limit a school district's ability or willingness to search for and select the best candidates. These limitations relate to external policy constraints placed upon school district administrators, and the "natural" recruiting advantages indigenous to a school district's locale.

First, external policy constraints on school districts limit their ability to select teachers—forcing them to satisfice as they choose among candidates. In some school districts, state policies inhibit the administrators' capacity to recruit and select out-of-state teachers. For example, state (or local) policies may:

1. Require specific reading courses (taught only in the state's universities) and a demonstration of knowledge of the state's constitution in order for teachers to be certified;
2. Limit the initial salary of an incoming out-of-state teacher's salary to a maximum of five years on the salary schedule;
3. Disallow the reimbursement of travel expenses in recruiting and relocating teachers.

Second, the "natural" recruiting advantages indigenous to some school districts limit administrators' willingness to expend extra effort to find the best teachers. Some districts can rely on supplies of talented teachers who move there. Teachers are drawn to some districts because the community is a highly desirable place to live, their spouses work in local industry or universities, and parents and the school board have excellent reputations for supporting teachers. Two of these three factors are external to the school district and can create large applicant pools with little or no effort by the district.

In part, administrators are unwilling to expend resources in recruiting when they find that many teachers, including talented ones, "come to them." This justifies their behavior in limiting their search for candidates. To be sure, school districts visit numerous universities to meet potential candidates, disseminate literature on the district's schools, and interview candidates throughout the year. However, because school district administrators believe that talented teachers "come to them," the costs of extensive recruiting are perceived to outweigh the potential benefits of such efforts.

In sum, school districts have been beset with large applicant pools, antiquated management information systems, inadequate staffing, the high internal mobility of teachers, and recruiting limitations placed upon them by state policies. Countering these organizational demands and constraints are the "natural" recruiting advantages indigenous to some school districts. These factors inhibit both the ability and willingness of administrators to maximize, and result in satisficing.

However, one school district in our sample moves from satisficing toward maximizing. In East Williston, teachers, administrators, and school board members judge the benefits of gathering extensive and intensive data as outweighing the costs. In spite of the district's natural advantages, administrators actively collect information on candidates and then choose the best.

THE RETENTION OF TEACHERS

What Do Teachers Experience as Candidates and New Hires?

The series of procedures taken by school districts to recruit, assess, and hire teachers include building applicant pools, measuring the qualifications of candidates, and selecting teachers who best meet local needs. However, the organizational context is also vitally important, because the process must be looked at not only from the district's point of view but from the perspective of the teacher as well.

The case studies reveal that the policies, procedures, and communications that teachers experience during the selection process may influence their perceptions of teaching and of themselves as teachers. Applicants who are treated with respect are more likely to perceive that they are valued candidates. Candidates who are treated as professionals are more likely to perceive themselves as developing professional teachers. New hires who are provided with adequate professional support are more likely to avoid frustration and failure. All such positive factors promote retention.

Handling Applicants and Candidates

Teacher selection processes can be formal or informal, impersonal or personal. Although formal selection processes are not necessarily impersonal and informal selection processes are not necessarily personal, they affect the attitudes of teacher-candidates whatever they are.

Candidates may see a favorable side to formality. Formality may be equated with fairness, and it also signals to candidates that they must undergo scrutiny and be judged worthy. Formal selection procedures are a ritual—a rite of passage. The more difficult the passage, the more likely a candidate is to value being hired.

Formal selection systems developed out of the need to manage large numbers of applicants effectively, efficiently, and equitably. More than occasionally, however, highly bureaucratic systems develop the negative attributes of impersonality. They devise bureaucratic routines that discourage candidates by treating them as "numbers," not as potentially valuable employees. In one case, for example, experienced teachers are treated as if they are novices, not "top-of-the-line professionals." In another case, candidates essentially are required to telephone a prerecorded announcement to discover where vacancies exist—forcing them to compete in a "rat race." In still another case, Central Office personnel occasionally mishandle important communications—forcing candidates to experience long delays.

In some cases, Central Office personnel are reported to be "difficult," "not helpful," and "discourteous." Without personal attention and good communication, candidates may well sense that the school district does not value them. Especially in a period of high demand for teachers, school districts should beware of such self-defeating behavior.

Inducting New Hires

New, inexperienced members of organizations cannot be expected to equal the performance of senior members. An initial period of assistance and assessment of new hires is helpful. This initial transition period is called induction; it enables the two sides to observe each other's performance and decide if they have made the correct decision.

In that regard, school districts are no different from other organizations. The induction period provides the opportunity for new hires to be assisted and assessed by seniors and administrators. Effective support requires systematic training and support to help new teachers achieve higher levels of competence, and the formal designation of the provider of assistance and expertise—principal, department chair or other senior teacher, or Central Office supervisor. The induction process can both weed out unsatisfactory teachers and improve the performance of those who are retained.

"Induction programs" suggest something more formal than the "new teacher programs" administered in the school districts in our study. They also reveal both promise and problems.

In East Williston, the tight coupling among selection processes (from recruitment to evaluation) impacts favorably upon new hires. Curriculum associates, who are involved in the entire selection process, communicate the district's expectations to new teachers, tailor staff development to meet their specific needs, and evaluate them upon the extent to which they meet these expectations. This close articulation among selection processes may not be possible in large school districts. However, even in large school districts where selection processes are not as tightly bound, we found other promising effects. For example, in Montgomery County, new teachers report that their plans to remain in teaching were influenced by the positive support they received from department chairs and principals and the feelings of efficacy this support engendered.

On the other hand, in some schools where the distribution of resources is not equal to need, induction has its problems.

In schools where principals are burdened with too many other responsibilities or where senior teachers—because of class scheduling conflicts—are not available when needed, new teachers report feeling "thrown to the wolves" during their first year. Proper induction cannot occur without the crucial induction resource: *the expertise that resides within a cadre of senior teachers at a school.*

School districts usually assign the same number of department chairs (or "senior teachers") to each school even though each school has a different number of new teachers. Some schools cannot retain senior teachers who possess the expertise necessary for effectively inducting new teachers. As previously noted, some schools have better reputations and have other advantages in attracting and holding senior teachers. These "more desirable" schools are characterized by well-behaved students who are academically motivated, parents who care and have influence, principals who are effective leaders, and more convenient locations. Consequently, more desirable schools will tend to have more senior teachers and "less desirable" schools will tend to have more new teachers. (This problem is illustrated by one school in our study in which 40 percent of the faculty were first-year teachers.) The effects of this phenomenon are twofold: First, principals of schools that have more than their "fair share" of new teachers find induction an administrative burden. Second, some schools, with the most difficult educational problems will not have an adequate number of senior teachers to help supervise new hires. Often they will have less experienced principals as well.

TEACHER INVOLVEMENT

How Do Teacher Selection Practices Professionalize Teaching?

There is a growing realization that many teachers are being forced by education policies to teach under undesirable and unprofessional conditions—conditions that are more likely to contribute to teacher dissatisfaction and attrition, particularly among the most highly qualified (Darling-Hammond and Wise, 1983; Chapman and Hutcheson, 1982). In addition to inadequate material resources, physical supports, and time for preparation and teaching, teachers have little input into decisions that critically affect their work environment. A professional working environment allows professionally trained teachers to exercise, within commonly accepted standards, judgments about what is to be taught, how it is to be taught, and how learning is to be assessed, and to participate collectively in setting and enforcing standards.

An important opportunity for teachers to define and implement professional standards is provided by their participation in the selection of teachers and administrators. The case study of Durham County schools described how a comprehensive restructuring of the district's personnel management system can enhance the influence of senior teachers in the selection process. The new system fosters shared decisionmaking among principals, increases senior teachers' investment in new teachers, and encourages local schools to address crucial issues vital to the school district. Because the change effort is in an early stage of its development, it is difficult to ascertain the full effects on teacher professionalism.

In our study, the most advanced example of teachers' defining and implementing professional standards was found in East Williston, where collegial decisionmaking has been the practice for some time.

The Professionalization of Teachers in East Williston

In East Williston, senior teachers are able to shape their work environment by defining the nature of the teacher vacancies to be filled, closely scrutinizing candidates and communicating commonly accepted standards, and being involved in the recruitment and selection of the district's administrators. The following reveals how teacher involvement in the selection process defines, implements, and reinforces professional standards in teaching.

First, when a teacher vacancy occurs in a school, the principal appoints a search team made up primarily of teachers. The first task of the team is to describe the nature of the job. The team specifies the responsibilities associated with each new position. Importantly, as the team reviews candidates, the school district's philosophy comes into play and the general and specific responsibilities and qualifications take on concrete meaning. Thus, the teacher selection process in East Williston is informed continually by the values of both the school district and its teachers.

Second, senior teachers examine the credentials of prospective teachers and are principal participants in interviewing and observing the teaching performance of candidates. Importantly, as will be described later, senior teacher involvement intensifies the selection process for prospective teachers and acts as an initial induction requirement for new hires. During the formal interview, senior teachers assess a candidate's values and strengths and how well they mesh with those of the district. Candidates report that the interviews are "grueling" and "intensive."

Additionally, the teacher selection team assesses a candidate's capacity to perform as an independent professional. In part, this assessment is made during the observation of a candidate's teaching in his or her school or in a demonstration classroom in East Williston. Given that these teacher assessments are made in collaboration with administrators, the selection process establishes the basis for performance standards as well as the working relationships among senior teachers, new hires, and school district administrators.

Third, the school district's approach to hiring administrators resembles its approach to hiring teachers. Mixed teams of teachers, administrators, parents, and students help select administrators—a more elaborate and time-consuming process than the selection of teachers. This unusual process of "intensive" communication among a wide variety of organizational participants also establishes the basis for professional performance standards. Most important, this process enables teachers to construct their relationships with peers, administrators, parents, and students according to their conceptualizations of effective teaching and quality education.

Furthermore, as suggested above, the case study reveals that the effects of the teacher selection process in East Williston are manifested most clearly in the professionalization of new hires as well as senior teachers in the district.

New Hires. Teacher candidates in East Williston report that they were handled in a way different from what they had come to perceive as the norm in most school districts. Successful candidates believe that the district actually assesses their qualifications, their personalities, and their teaching performance in a process that involves the candidates themselves. Importantly, teacher candidates are assessed and challenged initially by their peers—i.e., those senior teachers involved in the selection process.

Other districts have less intense processes which consist of credential examination and interviews by a Central Office and site administrator. In some districts, groups of candidates are interviewed simultaneously by administrators, with candidates feeling less scrutinized and less involved.

However, from the successful candidate's perspective in East Williston, the major effect of the selection process is to make him or her feel more important than they have ever been made to feel in their careers. In East Williston, the selection process is a recruitment device. New hires commented variously that "I was flying high when they selected me. . . . I felt a tremendous ego boost. . . . The process made me feel like I was wanted here."

New hires are most impressed by what they perceive as the professionalism of the process and of their acceptance as professionals. One teacher recalled:

> I was called for an interview with the committee. With twelve interviewers, it looked like the Supreme Court. They asked me penetrating questions. It was very emotional. I felt somewhat uneasy afterwards, but it was the most professional interview I have ever been through. I subsequently had an one-and-a-half hour interview with the superintendent. They then sent a team to my district to watch me teach and to interview other members of my department. The team consisted of the superintendent, a principal, a teacher, and a student. They were there for four hours. I then visited the district for a day. I was impressed by the professionalism of the process.

At the conclusion of the selection process, teachers and administrators "know what the candidate knows." Teachers and administrators impart professional expectations and new hires begin the process of learning what is expected of them. Additionally, the teacher selection process generates enthusiasm in successful candidates, an enthusiasm that carries over into their teaching as new hires in East Williston.

Another major effect upon new hires relates to the close articulation among the district's selection, curriculum and staff development, and evaluation processes. Curriculum associates, generally members of the teacher selection teams, have the major responsibility for helping new hires adjust to teaching in East Williston. An important part of this responsibility is to continue to communicate the district's expectations to new teachers and tailor staff development to meet their specific needs. Curriculum associates, the "master teachers" of East Williston, provide demonstration lessons and close supervision for new hires. In turn, the district's evaluation process is based directly upon the extent to which teachers meet the expectations of the curriculum associates as well as their principals.

Another major consequence of the selection process is that the team involved in selection becomes invested in the new hire's success. The process creates and reinforces feelings of loyalty on both sides and fosters teamwork. Senior teachers who are involved in selection cannot allow the new teacher to fail. And the new teacher is compelled not to fail his or her teammates. Whatever help is needed or sought is given. Teacher isolation, common in many school districts, is diminished in

East Williston by the selection process and the norm of collegiality it represents.

Senior Teachers. Senior teacher participation in teacher and administrator selection engages them with school-wide and district-wide issues. Teachers are given the opportunity to discuss with adults their own values and the values of the district. They are taken from their district to other districts to observe the way others operate. These are rare opportunities in themselves.

Senior teachers, in justifying their choices of candidates, are obligated to match their own philosophy of education with those of colleagues and the district and attempt to arrive at consensus. The teachers' views are taken seriously by the administration and themselves. Much like the new teachers they hire, senior teachers feel involved. They get to find out whether what they think is important is shared by others. They are empowered to help shape the school and the district—the environment in which they work. In the process, their own views are, of course, shaped. They are compelled to assess and reassess their individual and collective teaching strengths and weaknesses. In effect, senior teachers are able to define and evaluate their work—an essential task carried out by members of a profession.

Teachers also believe that the administrator selection process results in the hiring of principals who are comfortable with the "team approach." By this, they mean that administrators are hired who will respect the independence of the classroom teacher and will continue to value teacher input in essential organizational decisions. The consensual nature of the selection process itself practically ensures that those administrators recruited and selected by East Williston would embrace such organizational ideals.

Teachers welcome the additional responsibility entailed in their role in the selection process. They welcome the measure of control it gives them to choose their colleagues and superiors. They welcome the opportunity to rethink their own beliefs. They welcome the opportunity to shape their school and their school district. They welcome the sense of ownership and belonging that is engendered.

Professionalizing Teacher Selection

Although administrators in East Williston remain in charge of the selection process, the level of senior teacher participation approaches that employed in many university search procedures. While administrators make decisions and occasionally act peremptorily, the norm of practice is to respect, value, and use teacher input in selection as well as in curriculum and staff development and evaluation.

This breaching of the typical management/labor division of responsibility is welcomed by the teachers individually and collectively. The local teachers' association (an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers) supports teacher participation in selection decisions. In fact, it hardly has seemed an issue. Yet, in most school districts, the teachers' association insists that hiring is a management decision so that teachers cannot be held accountable for hiring incompetent teachers. The teachers' association in East Williston seems less concerned about the dismissal of less competent teachers and more concerned about the overall quality of the teaching force.

In part, East Williston finds and hires the quality of faculty it desires because of the community's "natural advantages." The school district is small and provides the opportunity for more effective communication between administrators and teachers. The community is relatively wealthy and is populated by academically oriented parents and academically achieving students. Most residents are highly educated and are engaged in business or the professions. The question is, How applicable is East Williston's teacher selection process in school districts of larger size and lesser wealth? What would the effect be?

The process could be replicated in larger districts. As noted, the direct financial cost is low. To be sure, the process is time-consuming. Principals and teachers must expend considerable time and effort in all phases of search, screening, and selection (as well as staff development and evaluation). Time requirements would increase as the number of teachers to be hired increased. But teachers may be more willing than generally believed to invest this time because they live with the consequences of both bad and good personnel decisions.

However, large school districts currently do not allocate resources to have teachers and principals define the responsibilities and qualifications for each vacancy, advertise separately for each vacancy, and closely assess the academic qualifications, interpersonal skills, and teaching performance of large numbers of candidates. Senior teachers would have to be assigned fewer classes and principals would need more auxiliary support services in order to devote the necessary time for professionalized teacher selection.

A belief in the importance of teacher involvement is prerequisite to the successful implementation of a professionalized teacher selection process. Management and teachers (and their teacher organizations) must concur that teacher involvement is important. There is no reason to think that the benefits for teachers of participating in the selection process would be different. And there is no reason for thinking that the experience which the candidates have would be substantially different. East Williston is perceived by candidates and teachers as a desirable place to teach—partly because of the attitude toward teachers revealed by the district's involving teachers in selection. That benefit should carry over.

The major question is whether a large district can generate a pool of high-quality, experienced candidates as East Williston tries to do. The supply of candidates depends on many factors. If the large district's demand is greater than the supply of experienced teachers, it may have to consider inexperienced candidates. The district, then, would have to find ways of appraising teaching performance—such as demonstration teaching or internships. Alternatively, the district could abandon the appraisal of teaching performance, in which case it would be left with only teacher involvement in selection. The case studies reveal that districts may gain some benefit from this alone.

District size aside, East Williston attracts teachers partly because of relatively high salaries, high expenditures, parents who care, and students who are academically motivated. Less wealthy districts cannot afford high salaries and general expenditures. However, a strong belief in the importance of teachers might permit some reallocation from some expenditure categories to salaries. But most important is the attractiveness of teaching in an educationally supportive environment. It would seem worthwhile for all districts to enhance their attractiveness to teachers by allowing them some involvement in decisionmaking. Teachers in East Williston, many of whom have come from other wealthy school districts, value East Williston's treatment of them as professionals. This attitude is communicated directly to candidates and teachers by the selection process. A reputation for teacher professionalism appears to make East Williston especially attractive to candidates. It might give even a school district of lesser wealth a competitive edge in recruitment, selection, and retention.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our major conclusions and recommendations are organized according to the six components of teacher selection: (1) recruitment, (2) screening, (3) hiring, (4) placement, (5) induction, and (6) evaluation. The first three components involve a school district's capacity to generate an applicant pool, compare applicants and eliminate those not qualified, and select those who fit the requirements of particular vacancies. The second three involve school district policies and practices that influence the types of positions assigned to beginning teachers, the quality of assistance provided to new teachers, and the quality of assessment during the initial year of teaching. We include these as aspects of the selection process because they influence the retention of beginning teachers: Both school districts and teachers continue to make decisions about continued employment during the first year of teaching.

Most of the recommendations are meant to inform policymaking at the school district level. However, school district planning takes place in a context which is shaped by state actions (and inactions), and by policymakers' and public attitudes, about the worth of teaching. Therefore, some recommendations are meant to inform state policymaking and some are meant to influence how policymakers and the public view teachers. Thus, the recommendations range from very specific recommendations to more general exhortations.

Teacher selection is a process embedded in a social-political-organizational context. As practiced today, it is the result of both careful planning, historical accident, and political compromise. Improving teacher selection, especially in the face of increasing demand for teachers, will not be easy. We have identified many problems; for some we have suggestions to offer; for others, we continue to defer to the wisdom of expert practitioners.

Some of our suggestions do not increase costs; some indeed will lower costs. Some may increase costs in the short run but save money in the long run. Others may increase costs or require a significant reallocation of existing resources. The goal, however, is to improve teacher selection processes and thereby improve the quality of the teaching force district by district, state by state, and nationally.

RECRUITMENT

The effectiveness of school district recruitment depends on several factors. First, school districts (and their recruiters) must have something to "sell" to potential candidates, including adequate salaries and attractive working conditions. Second, districts must sell their schools to the "right" candidates—ones who fit their requirements. Third, school districts must follow up on offers and reduce barriers for teachers to accept employment.

> Conclusion One: *State and local policies can enhance or reduce the efficacy of wide-ranging recruitment efforts.*

State and local policies can enhance the efficacy of a school district's efforts to recruit teachers. Policies that improve teacher salaries and fringe benefits, offer relocation incentives, enhance working conditions, and provide induction supports make recruiting easier and more effective.

State and local policies can also reduce that efficacy by slowing down the hiring process, inhibiting out-of-state recruitment, and inhibiting the interstate mobility of teachers.

First, most local school district policies require the placement of internal transfers (senior teachers) before new teachers can be hired. Given the high internal mobility of teachers in some school districts, the emptying of the internal transfer pool is a rather lengthy process. Therefore, those candidates (except for the few who are given open contracts) who are recruited and screened early in the year cannot be hired until late in the summer. By this time, information about them may be dated or the candidate may have been hired elsewhere.

Second, some state and local school policies may inhibit school district recruitment of out-of-state teachers by mandating highly specific college coursework requirements for state certification, disallowing the transferability of retirement and other benefits, limiting the initial salary of incoming, experienced out-of-state teachers, and not providing for the reimbursement of travel and moving expenses.

Third, complex state certification requirements inhibit the interstate mobility of teachers. Many teachers resign their present positions in order to accompany their spouses in job-related moves. Some teachers resign for other personal reasons. Thus, teacher resignations from one school district may not reflect permanent attrition from teaching. Many of these teachers intend to return to classroom teaching in other school districts in other states. However, the increasing diversity and complexity of certification requirements among states may very well inhibit the return of these highly mobile teachers to the classroom (see Reeder, 1986).

Districts experiencing shortages of qualified applicants find that both the monetary rewards and working conditions they can offer candidates are major determinants of the success of their recruiting efforts. Indeed, the status of public school teaching might well be improved if barriers to mobility of teachers were eliminated. Because school districts are not provided the resources or tools to seek talented, experienced teachers as if they were "free agents," talented, experienced teachers lose an important source of recognition. Teaching might be viewed quite differently by the public if talented teachers with significant experience were in a position to be bid for by school districts. While a "free market" might leave some school districts and some schools with only average teachers, it would increase pay and prestige not only for those teachers who are judged to be excellent, but also for teachers in general. The valuing of experience—as opposed to the subtle devaluation implied by the current unwillingness to bid for talent—could be salubrious. In addition, a "free market" might encourage schools to improve their working conditions to attract talented, experienced teachers.

> Recommendation 1A: *In the first instance, successful recruitment depends upon the attractiveness of teaching. Therefore, states and local districts should examine the salaries they offer teachers to see if they are competitive with those of other jurisdictions and occupations and should seek to improve the conditions of work which are important to teachers, such as the provision of adequate support to new teachers.*
>
> Recommendation 1B: *Certain state and local policies limit interstate mobility. Therefore, states which wish to recruit widely should reexamine certification, retirement, and other policies which prevent or discourage mobility. School districts should eliminate arbitrary limits on salary schedule placement and be prepared to provide travel and moving expenses.*

* * * * * *

> Conclusion Two: *Tight coupling between recruitment and hiring decisions promotes more effective teacher selection.*

An effective teacher selection process requires a congruence between recruiting and hiring. To this end, the process must include effective planning, communication between Central Office personnel and school principals, and coordination between recruiters and hiring officials.

First, effective planning requires that school districts accurately project vacancies and ascertain hiring needs. Districts need to project teacher demand and turnover based on program decisions, enrollment trends, age composition of the present teaching force, changes in retirement policies, and historical turnover rates of key groups (e.g., new teachers versus veteran teachers by subject matter field and grade level). By knowing how many vacancies are in the offing, and of what types, school districts can better target recruitment search for the "right" teachers.

Second, effective communication between the Central Office and school principals enables districts to identify where specific types of vacancies will occur. This will enable recruiters to match recruits with local school needs and the requirements of particular vacancies.

In view of the necessity of offering "open contracts" early in the year, tight coupling between Central Office recruiters and local school principals is essential. If selection criteria are not shared by personnel administrators and school principals, then the practice of offering open contracts to teachers early in the recruiting year and then later placing them in schools may result in suboptimal teacher assignments.

Third, effective coordination between recruiters and principals enables districts to give prompt and courteous consideration to prospective teachers. Burdensome paperwork requirements, poor treatment, and delayed hiring decisions will discourage prospective teachers and may impel them to seek employment elsewhere.

> Recommendation 2A: *Because school districts lose many candidates between recruitment and hiring, they should develop planning systems so that specific hiring needs can be more accurately anticipated and recruitment can be targeted.*
>
> Recommendation 2B: *The recruitment, screening, hiring, and placement phases of the selection process must be coordinated so that bureaucratic processing, red tape, and lapses in time do not result in the loss of desirable candidates. This coordination is especially important as demand exceeds supply and screening processes become more elaborate.*

SCREENING

Despite the conventional wisdom that everyone knows a good teacher when he sees one, and the common assumption that such judgments value the same qualities, very different conceptions of the "good teacher" are actually expressed in school district selection processes. Increasing state involvement in defining good teachers (expressed in more prescriptive standards for teacher education, certification, and tenure) also assumes a common notion of the good teacher. However, recent research finds that such consensus is illusory (see Carey, 1985); our case studies confirm this finding.

Conclusion Three: *Operational definitions of the "good teacher" vary across and within school districts.*

During the teacher selection process, school district administrators describe similar criteria that are used to screen for "good teachers." However, the case studies revealed that actual teacher selection criteria and outcomes differ across and within school districts. Differing selection criteria are reflected in the types and content of the screening mechanisms (or tools) used by personnel offices, as well as the weights applied to the various criteria. Furthermore, differing selection outcomes result from the type of decisionmaking process used by the school district as well as the values and influence of those administrators (or teachers) involved.

For example, the screening instruments used during the selection process and the weights given them favor different qualities of candidates. The case studies revealed that some school districts may favor academic qualifications in the selection process by weighting heavily the cut-off score on standardized tests while others may favor interpersonal skills by weighting heavily the score on standardized interview instruments.

Furthermore, screening mechanisms such as formal interview and testing programs may have built-in selection biases. Our findings revealed that some interview instruments favor a candidate's responses that reflect high affective (as opposed to cognitive) orientations toward teaching, while some testing instruments may assess knowledge that is not relevant to the subjects as taught in the school districts. If administrators do not perceive the biases inherent in these instruments, they may screen out teachers they might otherwise have wanted to hire.

School-level involvement in the screening process also influences teacher selection. If principals and teachers are significantly involved in screening for academic qualifications, interpersonal skills, and teaching performance, then teacher selection outcomes may differ significantly. On the one hand, by using standardized instruments or trained raters, a district enhances the reliability of the selection process. On the other hand, by enabling people who are most familiar with the requirements of a particular teaching position and expertise within a particular field to assess candidates, a district enhances the validity of its selection process. In effect, school districts are confronted with a tradeoff. Districts must balance screening tools that are inexpensive and provide somewhat reliable information *with* decentralized tools that are more costly and provide more valid information.

Recommendation 3A: *As states define standards for teaching (through new teacher education, certification, and tenure procedures) and as school districts define their own standards, they must recognize that there is no one best system of teaching and that teaching needs vary across and within school districts.*

Recommendation 3B: *As school districts adopt new selection instruments (tests, interview guides, etc.), they should ensure that the instruments and the weights given to their scores match the district's definition of good teaching.*

Recommendation 3C: *Senior teachers as well as principals should be involved in the selection process. Their involvement enhances the validity of the process, by providing greater insight into candidates' subject matter competence and teaching philosophy, and conveys a view of teaching as a professional role.*

* * * * * *

Conclusion Four: *In screening candidates, school districts inevitably balance high scores on objective measures of academic qualifications with assessments of other characteristics deemed important for teaching.*

The school districts in our study emphasize various screening procedures that measure the extent to which candidates possess academic qualifications. School districts review state certification, college transcripts, and professional references, and conduct basic-skills and subject-matter tests in order to assess the academic qualifications of prospective teachers. However, a school district's screening criteria will vary according to the procedures emphasized and how they are used. Some administrators accept state certification as a sufficient indicator of a candidate's academic qualifications. Others emphasize the quality of the college attended by the candidate and the grades he or she earned. Still others emphasize the results of a candidate's score on basic-skills or subject-matter tests.

However, at best, state certification confirms only that the candidate possesses minimal academic qualifications, and college transcripts do not take into account the variation among institutions attended by candidates and the difficulty of courses they have taken.

The recent concern over the quality of teacher education programs, and the general distrust of the meaning of a candidate's college record, have inspired more school districts (and states) to use subject-matter tests (either nationally or locally developed) to determine whether or not candidates possess academic qualifications.

These objective screening procedures may eliminate unqualified applicants from the pool as well as enable the district to treat large numbers of applicants evenhandedly. In addition, districts, by selecting candidates with high scores on objective measures of academic qualifications, can create a teaching force that will be seen as competent and able.

By employing rigorous academic requirements, districts hope to convince the public that all who are hired are prepared to perform at a high level of competence. Strong academic preparation is valued in its own right; and selective standards—standards that cannot be attained by all—become the basis for public trust. If not all teacher aspirants can pass the academic requirements, then those who can are worthy of the public's trust.

However, in screening candidates for high scores on objective measures of academic qualifications, the district may eliminate some candidates it might otherwise have wished to hire. In fact, the case studies revealed that formal tests (whose content may *not*, in certain instances, be related to teaching performance) may prevent school districts from being able to consider further some candidates who possess other characteristics deemed important for teaching. Since they cannot capture qualities of motivation, judgment, perseverance, and commitment, paper-and-pencil tests have low correlations with performance in most occupations. Still, such tests can provide useful measures of knowledge *if* their content is related to the types of knowledge deemed important.

The limitations of hiring tests for selecting the "best" applicants were revealed in some of the case study sites. For example, given the diverse student population characteristics of many schools, some school districts seek to fill vacancies with teachers who possess a wide range of interpersonal skills. These skills include caring for children or adolescents, having patience, and being able to motivate low-achieving students. Some principals consider these skills a more important indicator of effective teaching.

To select teachers with these characteristics, principals may prefer to hire "known quantities" such as substitute teachers, interns, volunteers, former students, and others recommended by trusted colleagues—an understandable preference, since few schools districts have procedures which reliably and validly ascertain that candidates can teach.

Similarly, in some settings the existence of tests is a symbol of selectivity, even though persistent questions remain about the extent to which the test content relates to desired knowledge. Where such measures are adopted, they may have dysfunctional consequences, reducing the size of the applicant pool according to criteria that, when operationalized, do not reflect the standards that were intended. This result comes from treating the tests as "black boxes," by not giving sufficient scrutiny to what test content actually measures.

The tension between screening for academic qualifications and screening for other important characteristics must be resolved during the selection process:

> Recommendation 4A: *High scores on measures of academic qualifications are seen as important indicators of staff quality. Such measures should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that they indeed reflect the qualities and types of knowledge desired of candidates.*
>
> Recommendation 4B: *Districts should seek candidates with high academic qualifications, interpersonal competence, and potential for teaching performance, but they should recognize that objective measures are imperfect indicators of teaching performance. It is important that teachers meet the needs of particular schools. Therefore, as school districts systematize and rationalize screening procedures, they should leave some degree of freedom for decisionmaking at the school site.*

* * * * * *

> Conclusion Five: *A school district's treatment of candidates during the selection process may cause some teachers to screen themselves into or out of the applicant pool.*

School districts vary in their treatment of applicants during the selection process. The case studies revealed that some districts used more professional and personal procedures, while others used more bureaucratic and impersonal procedures to screen their candidates. In part, the kind of screening procedures reflected the size of the school district: The larger the district, the more likely it was that candidates would experience bureaucratic and impersonal treatment during the selection process.

At the time of our study, the school districts in our sample were at the end of a period of teacher surplus. Their selection processes were designed to efficiently manage large applicant pools with understaffed personnel offices. Thus, these district personnel offices tended to use paperwork and inconvenient screening requirements to insulate themselves from an oversupply of prospective teachers who sought positions in their school districts.

By contrast, in districts where teachers and principals at the school site conducted most of the screening, candidates reported feeling valued and well-evaluated, and participants reported a sense of confidence and investment in their decisions and candidates. Teacher participation in the screening decision was an incentive for candidates to select themselves into the active recruit pool, because it conveyed the message that teachers and their opinions are valued and that the teacher's role is viewed as a professional one. Candidates viewed the quality of assessment of their teaching abilities by other teachers as more valid and insightful than other aspects of the screening process. They found this professional treatment to be a welcome relief from the bureaucratic procedures they had encountered elsewhere.

If school districts treat candidates discourteously, the candidates may infer that they are not valued as professionals. It may be that the more talented candidates (those with wider options) are less likely to tolerate discourteous treatment during the screening process and will seek other oportunities. Such candidates are most likely to accept teaching positions if their initial encounters with a district suggest they are and will be treated as professionals.

In centralized districts, problems of that sort encourage prospective teachers to circumvent the district's centralized screening procedures by going directly to principals and working the informal system. Once these prospective teachers become known to principals, principals may manipulate them into vacancies and centralized screening requirements are taken care of after the fact.

A major lesson to learn from such a situation is that they must be persistent in order to be hired—they must be willing to wait out the lengthy selection process and repeatedly contact the principal. This generally requires the candidate to be a member of the community, thus discriminating against candidates from outside the area. Because the best candidates may not be willing or able to be the most persistent candidates, the selection process may result in suboptimal teacher hiring.

> Recommendation 5A: *Prompt, courteous, and responsive treatment of candidates may go a long way toward determining who is hired. Districts should staff personnel offices adequately and train staff, including clerical staff, so that candidates receive appropriate and timely feedback throughout the selection process.*

HIRING

Effective recruiting and screening processes do not ensure effective teacher selection. Effective teacher selection depends upon the effectiveness of the hiring process as well—which in turn depends upon a school district's capacity to manage the logistics of hiring (i.e., process both applicants and information), and hire those who satisfy the demands of particular vacancies.

> Conclusion Six: *The process and logistics of teacher hiring may have at least as much influence on the quality of staff hired as do formal screening mechanisms.*

A common image of teacher selection processes is that they rank candidates according to some set of criteria, and then the top-ranking candidates are selected and hired. In fact, our case studies indicate that there is often little correspondence between the group of candidates who would have been top-ranked and those who were finally hired. The various obstacles described above result in the hiring of those candidates who are persistent and still available at the time hiring decisions are finally made.

If school district administrators are to hire the best available teachers, then the information they collect must be accessible and the desired candidates themselves must be available at the point when the decision is to be made. To do so, school districts must have an adequate management information system that expediently reports vacancies, effectively analyzes information collected on candidates, and equitably and efficiently communicates the information to decisionmakers.

However, the case studies revealed that school districts are forced to a "tradeoff" between the comprehensiveness of information collected and disseminated and the timeliness of decisionmaking. In effect, school districts were limited by several logistical problems in their efforts to effectively manage the hiring process.

First, specific vacancies are often not reported promptly. Inaccurate projections of teacher demand, delays associated with budget decisions (whether by the school district or the government), and the emptying of the internal transfer pool prevent school districts from determining some specific vacancies until (sometimes late) summer. School districts often find it difficult to estimate teacher attrition because some teachers do not resign until the summer. This problem is exacerbated by the tendency of principals to encourage their "resigning" teachers to submit late resignations so that they will not be "forced" to fill their vacancies from the internal transfer pool.

Second, school districts collect a considerable amount of information on candidates, but their management information systems may not be sufficient to keep track of the data. Antiquated manual filing systems prevent the cross-referencing of applicants who are potentially qualified in more than one subject area or grade level and who have particular extracurricular interests or skills. Thus, in some cases, school districts cannot consider all qualified candidates for appropriate teaching positions. In other cases, by the time these candidates are considered, they may have been hired elsewhere.

Third, once specific vacancies are confirmed and information on candidates adequately analyzed, principals need access to the data—which they do not always have. Divisions of labor within the personnel office may prevent some principals from considering certain candidates. Some principals who are favored or more aggressive may have access to more information, thus preventing other principals from considering some candidates. In some districts principals who are new to the district and those who are not in favor have difficulty staffing their schools.

Recommendation 6A: *As school districts attend to formal screening mechanisms, they should give equal attention to the sequencing and logistics of the process. A comprehensive but cumbersome process will inevitably result in the loss of candidates.*

Recommendation 6B: *School districts should develop and implement personnel management systems which deliver up-to-date candidate information equally to all decisionmakers.*

Recommendation 6C: *As the competition for teachers increases, school districts should shorten the time span between recruitment and placement.*

* * * * * *

Conclusion Seven: *Initial hiring processes tend to screen candidates on the basis of their qualifications; later hiring processes screen candidates on the basis of the characteristics of the vacancy.*

Recruitment and screening have different but complementary functions. Recruiting tries to find outstanding candidates; screening, especially formal screening, rank-orders the candidates from high to low, as if the district will start hiring at the top of the list. Hiring and placement, on the other hand, begin to include characteristics of the vacancy. Here, decisionmakers begin to assess the multiple capabilities of candidates against the specific requirements of vacancies.

Thus, a candidate who can teach math and science will be given precedence in a school that needs to cover two classes of math and three of science over a candidate who can teach only one or the other. Or a social studies teacher who can coach football will be given precedence over a social studies candidate who cannot. Or an English teacher who can or will supervise the school annual and newspaper will be given precedence over an English teacher who cannot or will not.

Presently, classroom teachers supervise numerous extracurricular activities. Some of these activities, such as major sports or the school newspaper, call for a high level of skill or interest from the teacher. Therefore, principals often prefer to hire teachers who possess these skills or interests, even if they are less academically qualified than others.

In such cases, a tension develops between initial hiring criteria focused on an individual's qualifications and later hiring criteria focused on a vacancy's characteristics. During the teacher selection process, this tension manifests itself in at least two ways: the timing of selection, and the demands upon schools and teachers.

First, Central Office administrators generally recruit and screen candidates early in the year. Because principals generally are not involved and the requirements of particular vacancies are not known during this initial stage of the hiring process, Central Office recruiters are unable to seek those with qualifications that necessarily fit forthcoming vacancies. Thus, during the latter stage of the hiring process, there may not be a match between those candidates screened on the basis of their qualifications and those teachers needed for particular vacancies.

Second, principals need to fill some vacancies with teachers who have multiple capabilities. On the one hand, Central Office recruiting and screening tend to focus on finding the candidates with the most outstanding qualifications—primarily related to academic ability and interpersonal skills. On the other hand, principals are drawn to the candidates who can assist the school in fulfilling both its curricular and extracurricular responsibilities. These candidates may or may not be at the "top of the list" of those recruited and screened by the Central Office.

> Recommendation 7A: *In the interest of efficiency, school districts should incorporate a consideration of the specific characteristics of vacancies as early in the selection process as possible. The result may be higher overall quality of candidates hired.*
>
> Recommendation 7B: *School districts may wish to reexamine the multiple roles which they expect teachers to play. To reduce the multiple roles presently expected of classroom teachers, districts may wish to assign auxiliary staff to perform some extracurricular responsibilities.*

PLACEMENT

Effective teacher selection requires the appropriate placement of new hires. Teachers should be placed in those classroom positions which are congruent with their experiences, qualifications, skills, and interests. New teachers should also be placed in positions where they can receive appropriate assistance. Appropriate placement of new hires depends upon school district policies and incentives offered to beginning as well as senior teachers.

> Conclusion Eight: *School district personnel policies often result in the placement of beginning teachers in the least attractive schools.*

School districts have internal as well as external teacher labor markets. In some cases, a school district's internal labor market—driven by system policies and intradistrict mobility patterns of senior teachers—has the most significant effect on the placement of beginning teachers.

As previously mentioned, school district policies generally mandate the placement of transferring senior teachers (either involuntary or voluntary) before new teachers can be hired. The case studies revealed that the effects of this district policy are far-reaching.

District policies usually allow senior teachers to request and be granted internal transfers to schools of their choice. In practice, these senior teachers tend to transfer away from more "difficult" schools to more "desirable" schools.

Difficult schools tend to be those with high teacher turnover, changing student enrollments, inadequate administrative leadership, little community support, and students who are difficult to teach. Desirable schools tend to be the opposite. It is no surprise, then, that transferring senior teachers and the best recruits are more likely to be placed in the desirable schools of their choice, while difficult schools—those with the fewest supports for learning to teach—tend to be filled with beginning teachers.

Because senior teachers have "first dibs" on the most "desirable" schools *and* vacancies, the mobility of the internal transfer pool has varying effects on different types of schools, teachers, and, ultimately, students.

For example, parents who have the most influence in the community will demand the best teachers for their children. These parents assist in creating the conditions which will attract senior teachers and the best recruits. Thus, the least experienced teachers are more likely to be placed in the least attractive assignments. The consequence is that the least advantaged students (who generally have parents with less influence) are more likely to be taught by novice teachers.

Furthermore, the transfer of the most able senior teachers to desirable schools means fewer opportunities for beginning teachers to receive their support and their expert assistance. The end result is that schools with the largest numbers of beginning teachers are least able to provide adequate support for these new recruits.

> Recommendation 8A: *School districts should alter incentives so that teachers, as they gain seniority, will not opt to transfer from unattractive to attractive schools.*
>
> Recommendation 8B: *School districts should alter working conditions in high-transfer schools so that teaching in them becomes more attractive to experienced teachers.*
>
> Recommendation 8C: *School districts should disperse beginning teachers among schools of all types or place them in settings where they can receive adequate supervised induction.*

INDUCTION

The teacher selection process does not end with placement. Both the district and teachers continue to make choices. Approximately 40 percent of beginning teachers resign from teaching within the first two years of teaching in some districts.

Administrators set the conditions that encourage new teachers to remain in teaching, including stability of the working environment, the assistance of administrators and senior teachers, and access to district resources. In turn, promising new teachers consider these conditions and how well they are making the transition from college graduate to professional teacher.

The impending increase in teacher demand will require that school districts hire a large number of new teachers. McLaughlin et al. (1986) contend that districts must reassess the manner in which new teachers are inducted, noting that:

> Teachers whose initial assignments are frustrating or stressful seem more likely to experience decreased commitment, confidence, and satisfaction in later years than those whose initial assignments are supportive and satisfying. Thus, all the strategies designed to restructure the workplace for teachers are even more important in the case of the beginning teacher. (p. 426)

If school districts do not attend to the problems facing new teachers, then "the U.S. system of education risks producing yet another cadre of individuals who enter teaching with a strong desire to serve students—but who find, after exposure to the working conditions of their profession, that they can't and won't teach" (McLaughlin et al., 1986, p. 426).

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> Conclusion Nine: *Beginning teachers value supervised induction, which helps them learn to teach and to learn the expectations of the school district. Supervised induction enhances a teacher's feeling of efficacy and reported propensity to remain in teaching.*

The case studies reveal that beginning teachers appreciate and benefit from the assistance they receive from administrators and senior teachers during the induction process, especially in helping them "adjust" to students and school life, as well as the district's curriculum. Some told us they had selected their teaching position because they knew such support would be available.

Effective induction requires systematic training and support to help beginning teachers achieve higher levels of competence; the formal designation of the provider of support who has sufficient time and a mandate to perform this function (e.g., department chair or other senior teacher, or subject matter supervisor); and resources to be made available in proportion to need. (The more beginning teachers to be inducted in a school, the more induction resources are needed.)

The case studies revealed that induction support varies both across and within school districts. The causes are largely the lack of resources and time allocated for induction, and the unequal distribution of senior teachers.

For example, in districts where financial resources are adequate, senior teachers are given adequate released time for "mentoring," and principals are available for consultations, beginning teachers report effective, professional induction support.

In districts where financial resources are inadequate, senior teachers—because of class-scheduling conflicts—are not available when needed, and principals are burdened with too many other responsibilities, beginning teachers report that they are "basically thrown to the wolves."

Poor communication processes, overwhelming paperwork, and inadequate planning account for much of the ineffectiveness in induction, but some programs fall short because they lack that crucial induction resource: the expertise residing in a cadre of senior teachers.

Most school districts set an imbalance in motion to begin with, by assigning the same number of department chairs or "senior" teachers to each school regardless of how many beginning teachers at a school require supervision. The imbalance then worsens as senior teachers transfer from the less attractive schools and districts tend to place their beginning teachers there.

> Recommendation 9A: *School districts should establish supervised induction programs. They can do so by dispersing teachers so that the supervisory resources available in each school are adequate. Or they can create mentor teacher programs to increase the district's capacity for supervised induction; or they can establish specially staffed induction schools where senior teachers supervise beginning teachers.*

EVALUATION

Although it would be useful to evaluate all candidates' classroom skills and academic qualifications before hiring them, most school districts find that the costs in money and time outweigh the benefits. Consequently, they must make tradeoffs between low- and high-cost information collection, and evaluation before and after the hiring decision.

Conclusion Ten: *School districts generally have the opportunity to assess teachers' performance only after they are hired and on the job.*

Most of our case study sites were large urban school districts (two of them employ over 6000 teachers), where Central Office personnel administrators are expected—efficiently and equitably—to screen a small number of qualified candidates from applicant pools of several thousand. Personnel offices use an array of information for that purpose—primarily low- to medium-cost data. Low-cost data include information gleaned from certifications, transcripts, application forms, and references. Medium-cost data include information from formal interviews and subject-matter or basic-skills tests. High-cost data would include on-the-job assessments of teacher performance, through demonstrations or other observed teaching situations.

One of four case study sites, a small district with a totally decentralized hiring process, was able to use observations of performance and other high-cost data in making its selection decisions. In this district, participants felt confident in the quality of their decisions and candidates felt that their abilities had been adequately assessed. However, in large highly centralized districts, large applicant pools, poor timing, and a lack of resources impede performance assessment before hiring.

First, large applicant pools may render it virtually impossible to observe all applicants and treat them evenhandedly—a logistical problem made all the worse by recent reductions in personnel staffing at some Central Offices.

Second, poor timing—a lack of coordination between the recruiting and screening processes—impedes observation of applicants. For example, by the time budgets are finalized and internal transfers are placed, school may have ended for the year, precluding classroom observation.

Finally, a lack of resources—that is, restricted personnel budgets and limited numbers of teacher evaluators—can constrain a school district's efforts to observe applicants prior to hiring. School districts generally do not set aside travel money for candidates to visit their schools or for administrators and teachers to visit candidates in their schools. Besides, administrators and teachers are often overburdened with other responsibilities that prevent them from making such visits.

Classroom observation is an example of high-cost data. By definition, observation of only a few candidates means inequity. But the alternative—reliance on more "cost-effective," equitable screening mechanisms—means that school districts cannot be sure that candidates are effective teachers until they have been hired and their performance has been observed and evaluated over a period of time. The concept of tenure was created precisely to allow for post-hiring selection decisions that must rely on real evidence of performance. These decisions, though, must be carefully made, based on sufficient evidence, if the function of tenure is to be realized.

> Recommendation 10A: *School districts should establish a special evaluation system to assess the performance of first-year teachers. The system should be designed and staffed so that it will engender confidence in the quality of its decisions.*[1]

BEYOND TEACHER SELECTION: THE INDUCTION SCHOOL

As schools face a growing demand for teachers and as society becomes more complex, it is important to attract and retain talented teachers. Some school district policies work against this goal by allowing teachers with seniority to transfer to schools of their choice. As a result desirable schools become rich in experienced staff and less desirable or "difficult" schools become weighted with beginning teachers. That makes life doubly stressful for beginning teachers who, assigned students who are difficult to teach, have few experienced teachers to turn to for advice. Consequently, they may be all the more inclined to abandon teaching. Meanwhile, the students may become still more disenchanted with education from being taught by another in a succession of beginning teachers and substitutes.

Our analysis suggests that districts should designate high-turnover schools as "induction schools"—schools that will be staffed by a mix of highly expert seasoned professionals and beginning teachers. The purpose would be to provide a supervised internship (including both assistance to and assessment of beginning teachers) while giving the students a better education. Although a variety of models may be appropriate, heavy staffing should be a key feature. The benefits would include:

- Supervision for beginning teachers with eased entry to teaching, better preparation for teaching, and reduced attrition;
- An attractive assignment for senior teachers that recognizes and uses their talent and experience;
- A setting wherein first-year teachers could be efficiently and effectively evaluated; and
- More resources and more stable teaching for disadvantaged children.

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[1] Some of the requirements for such a system are described in Wise et al. (1984).

The induction school can advance teaching as a profession. It is based on the idea that, although the university can educate the prospective teacher, a teacher can become fully prepared only through extensive, supervised classroom experience. In the induction school, seasoned veterans can help induct novices into the profession.

Once novice teachers have been well-prepared and carefully scrutinized, school districts can allow them to operate as independent professionals—making judgments about what is to be taught, how it is to be taught, and how student learning is to be assessed. Professional teachers—properly trained and with experience—will be granted respect and status by the public. The selection process for teachers is the key juncture at which school systems can upgrade the quality of the teaching force. Professionalizing hiring and induction can create the possibility that entry to teaching will be sufficiently selective and well-supported to sustain a teaching force that will capture public confidence and will enable genuine educational reform.

In the process, schools will be better able to attract, select, and retain the talented individuals needed to prepare students for the 21st century. We have long been accustomed to speaking of the "teaching profession," without giving much thought to the term. But on the day when we find ourselves regularly referring to teachers as professionals, we will know that we have achieved something of great benefit to our schools, teachers, students, and citizenry.

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